

RAJAH'S SERVANT

by A. B. Word



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with a Preface by

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and

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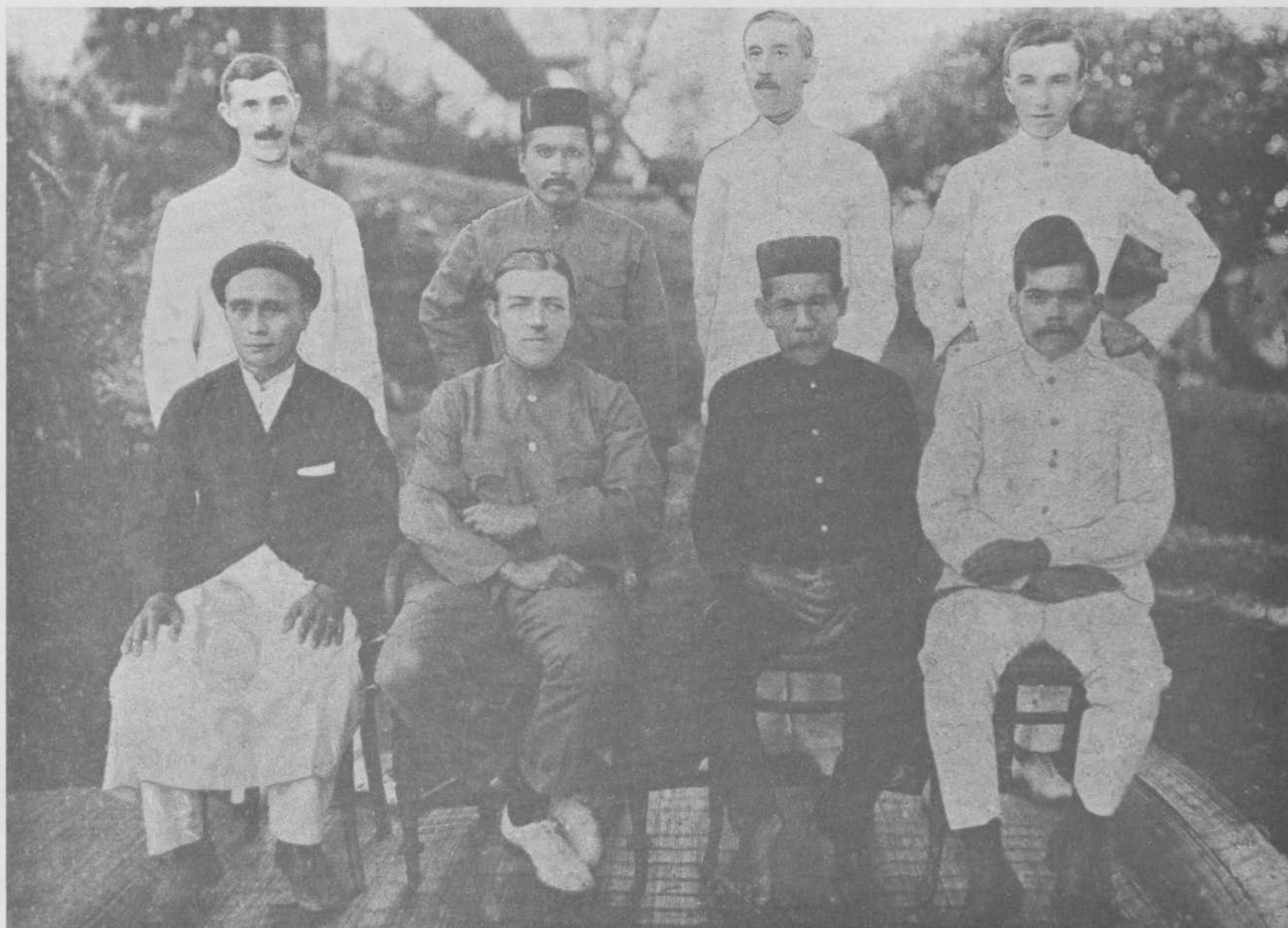
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RAJAH'S SERVANT



Resident A. B. Ward and his men at Simanggang, circa 1913. Front row (left to right): Datu Abang Haji Tamin, Rajah Muda Charles Vyner Brooke, Tuanku Drahman, and Datu Abang Haji Abdulrashid. Back row (left to right): A. B. Ward, Abang Endot, S. Cunyngname (Commandant, Sarawak Rangers), J.A.H. Hardie (Resident 2nd Class, Simanggang). Photograph courtesy Mr. Peter Tinggom, the Honorable the Resident, Second Division, Sarawak.

THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

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PREFACE

The early history of Sarawak under European rule is well documented by ~~the~~ personal memoirs of Europeans ~~who~~ aided James Brooke in his struggles against Brunei overlords and Iban "pirates." Not least among these are the published diaries and letters of the first White Rajah himself, amounting to some ten volumes in all. ~~The~~ second White Rajah, Charles Brooke, who succeeded his uncle James in 1868, and whose efforts fashioned ~~the~~ Brooke state as it endured until 1941, is a far more obscure figure. Charles Brooke wrote a book called Ten Years in Sarawak concerning his own early days as an outstation officer from 1853 to 1863. Aside from that one invaluable work and ~~the~~ pages of ~~the~~ semi-official Sarawak Gazette, printed from 1870 onwards, virtually nothing has been published which adequately describes his supremely personal methods of administration.

~~The~~ Sarawak State Archives in Kuching contain many of Charles Brooke's letters, as well as court records and other materials relating to his regime. But his was not the type of government which will ever be adequately described solely on ~~the~~ basis of official papers. Charles Brooke made a virtue of disdain for involved regulations and paperwork of all sorts. He took a dim view of colonial rulers in Malaya and India who, in his opinion, tried to compensate for ~~their~~ own inadequate knowledge of ~~the~~ country and people by framing elaborate regulations which ~~the~~ natives could not understand.

This outlook requires that any student of his government should be more than usually dependent on personal memoirs. Yet up to now ~~they~~ have barely existed. Of all ~~the~~ great Charles Brooke Residents, only one, Charles Hose of ~~the~~ Baram, published anything approaching an account of outstation rule.¹ But Hose was far more interested in ethnography than administration, which he accordingly relegated to the margins of his various books.

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1. See in particular Charles Hose and William McDougall, The Pagan Tribes of Borneo (London: MacMillan, 1912), vol. II, pp. 257-310a. Hose also published two volumes of miscellaneous reminiscences: Fifty Years of Romance and Research (London: Hutchinson, 1927) and The Field Book of a Jungle Wallah (London: Witherby, 1929). Another Brooke Resident and close friend of ~~the~~ Second Rajah, Charles A. Bampfylde, was ~~the~~ co-author of ~~the~~ semi-official A History of Sarawak Under its Two White Rajahs 1839-1908 (London: Sotheman, 1908).

The accounts left by the Rajah's wife, the Ranee Margaret, and by his two daughters-in-law are even less informative.² The various lady Brookes came to Sarawak as family members and tourists in a grand sense: they were not close to the government. The opinions of the two daughters-in-law on the subject of the ruler and his rule are colored by extreme and contradictory personal biases.

The present work thus goes a long way toward filling an unfortunate gap in the primary source material. Arthur Bartlett Ward served for twenty-four years in the Sarawak Civil Service, seventeen of them under Charles Brooke. His career covered a wide range of outstation assignments, and terminated after nearly eight years service as Resident of the First Division, then the senior government post, just under the Rajah himself.

Rajah's Servant may well be enjoyed solely as a lively and readable account of life in Borneo in the years before modernity began to erode the traditions of the native peoples. But this work is also a mine of useful first-hand information about the personality and policies of Charles Brooke. The story of the Rajah's ambitions with regard to Brunei, for example, includes much new material. Ward relates how Brooke established, on his private property in Brunei, a fort-like building which he hoped would become the center of a new Sarawak administration over the ancient sultanate. His dream died in 1906, when London decided instead to maintain an independent Brunei with a British Resident. Equally valuable is the author's description of the long-drawn-out Iban rebellion in the headwaters of the Batang Lupar from 1897 to 1908. It provides insights into both the motives of the rebel leaders, and the dilemma faced by a government with limited capabilities and resources in its attempt to deal with them.

One of the most important aspects of this work is the author's picture of everyday Brooke government functioning in such outstations as Simanggang, headquarters of the Second Division. This account provides a welcome complement to certain short stories by the late W. Somerset Maugham, also set in Simanggang.³ Admirable as the Maugham stories are, they

2. The Ranee Margaret of Sarawak, My Life in Sarawak (London: Methuen, 1913); Good Morning and Good Night (London: Constable, 1934). The Ranee Sylvia of Sarawak, Sylvia of Sarawak: An Autobiography (London: Hutchinson, 1936); The Three White Rajahs (London: Cassell, 1939). The Dayang Muda of Sarawak, Relations and Complications (London: John Lane, 1929).

3. See "The Outstation" and "The Yellow Streak" in W. Somerset Maugham, The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham (London: Heinemann, 1951), pp. 1446-1474 and 456-480 respectively.

were certainly never intended to be read as social documents-- a role which they have been forced to play up to now for lack of any alternative.

Writing of Simanggang, Ward vividly sketches the rule of the semi-independent Brooke Resident served by two or three European officers and a handful of Malay Native Officers. The focus of this government was the Resident's Court, meeting in the white-washed ironwood fort, where justice was dispensed to the mixed population of bazaar Chinese, down-river Malays, and pagan Ibans of the interior. The natives flocked to the court, which by its simple methods and respect for their adat, or customary law, became a familiar part of their way of life. Such access to justice was the major "social service" which the Brooke state provided, for it was not until World War I that the tiny administration could even maintain peace in huge areas of the Iban-populated interior.

Ward's account illustrates how the role of such Native Officers as Sindut, Dagang, and Tuanku Putra of Simanggang was far more significant than that of the better-publicized Datus who served a largely ceremonial function on the Supreme Council in Kuching. The outstation Native Officers often a rough species of frontier Malay, may have lacked the polish of their Kuching brethren; but they held posts of real importance and responsibility in the government, guiding the European officers in court work, serving as leaders on punitive expeditions against Iban rebels, and acting as the infrequently supervised administrators of such important sub-districts as Betong and of border posts like Lubok Antu.

With regard to Charles Brooke himself, this volume does not pretend to be an unbiased account. The author frankly asserts his love and respect for the man who ruled Sarawak for almost half a century. But it is not by any means a wholly uncritical account. Charles Brooke emerges as a figure whose formidable surface austerity concealed a deeply sentimental dedication to the welfare of his tiny state. His love and knowledge of the country made him loathe to change anything. He was so conservative in many respects that, for example, he would not tolerate the alteration of a stick of furniture in his favorite outstation. Yet, in the final years of his reign he began to see that a changing world demanded innovation. He pushed ahead with administrative reform and a degree of economic development. Characteristically, in the last months of his life he was anxiously supervising the completion of a wireless facility to link Kuching and the outstations with the outside world. This intriguing and unresolved contradiction in the Rajah's personality comes through clearly in Ward's account.

This memoir was written in 1934, not long after the author retired to England. He has not made any significant alterations

in the manuscript since then.⁴ It is the work of a recently retired Brooke official, surveying his life's work from a vantage point half way through the reign of the last White Rajah, Charles Vyner Brooke. Understandably, therefore, Ward is reserved in his comments about Vyner, about whom the reader will learn next to nothing.

The date of the work should also be considered by anyone who disagrees with the author's frequent observations on European rule in Asia. Nationalism in many areas was still in its infancy, and throughout the area which today makes up the Federation of Malaysia it was yet unborn. The author's opinions stand as a valuable expression of the attitudes and ideals which helped to motivate Sarawak civil servants, recorded when the tide of imperialism was still strong in the colonies if not in the mother country.

The reader must bear in mind that when Ward refers to the present he is of course referring to the early nineteen-thirties. Since he wrote, Sarawak has passed through great periods of change--the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945, cession to Britain, colonial rule from 1946 to 1963, and initial independence within the Federation of Malaysia. Numerous figures living when the work was composed are now dead, including Charles Vyner Brooke and his younger brother, Bertram Brooke, the Tuan Muda. Conditions in the country have altered enormously. Headhunting is no longer a sporadic nuisance, even in the far interior. The art of Malay weaving, which Ward feared might wholly vanish in Sarawak, has done virtually just that, although it survives in Brunei. The number of motor vehicles in Kuching has risen from the figure of 106, which astonished the author in 1934, to more than 1200.

A final point should be made for the benefit of anthropologists and others who may be distressed or confused by the author's use of the term "Dyak" (frequently spelled "Dayak" today). In Dutch (now Indonesian) Borneo this term was applied to any non-Moslem inhabitant of the interior. In Sarawak it was always restricted to Ibans (Sea Dyaks) and to Land Dyaks, and never applied by administrators to Kenyahs, Kayans, or others. Moreover, Land Dyaks were almost invariably referred to as such. Thus, "Dyak" ninety-nine times out of a hundred meant Iban--and that is the meaning of the term as it is used throughout this work, without exception.

4. Some excerpts from Rajah's Servant dealing with the Second Rajah were published under the title "Some Memories of Rajah Charles Brooke" in the Sarawak Gazette, September 30 and October 31, 1952, pp. 200-202 and 213-215 respectively.

The authors of this Preface have added a limited number of footnotes at various places in the text.

Arthur Bartlett Ward is still in good health today. He lives in retirement at Pelham Lodge, Ryde, Isle of Wight. He still takes an active interest in Sarawak affairs. The following is a sketch of the author's career in Sarawak taken from the 1925 Sarawak Civil Service List.

WARD, ARTHUR BARTLETT

1899-1923

Resident First Division

£680 p.a.

Born 14 May, 1879

After two years at Simanggang served approximately seven years at Limbang, one at Bintulu, another six at Simanggang, followed by eight as Resident of the First Division in Kuching. The last Officer to hold that appointment.

Appointed a Cadet 5 May 1899. Duty in the Second Division 31 May 1899. Duty at Limbang 1 July 1901. Promoted Assistant Resident 1 January 1904. In charge of Limbang and Brooketon 1 April 1905. Promoted Resident 2nd Class 1 January 1906. In charge of Bintulu 11 March 1908. Resident of Bintulu 1 May 1908. Resident of Simanggang 15 April 1909.

Acting Resident First Division, Member, Chairman and Secretary of the permanent Committee of Administration, Member of Supreme Council, Judge of the Supreme Court and Registrar of Societies 1 November 1915. Confirmed as Resident 1st Class, First Division, 1 January 1917. Officer Administering the Government, jointly with the Treasurer, 20 September 1920 to 8 October 1921 and again 1 September 1922 to 5 August 1923.

Member of Council Negri 1909 to 1924. Took part in the Mujong Expedition May 1915.

Left Sarawak 9 August 1923 with permission to retire on pension at the expiration of seven months' furlough.

Appointed a Member of the Sarawak State Advisory Council in England 16 May 1924.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Kuching, Sarawak
May, 1966

Otto C. Doering III
Robert M. Pringle

FOREWORD

My wife was at the bottom of all this.

She said it was a thousand pities children knew so little about their fathers' lives.

So I have tried to tell my children something of the years spent in the Far East. I have had no thrilling adventures, only the every day life of an officer in a very fascinating country. Above all, I wanted my children to glimpse a fragment of the history of romantic, unique Sarawak, and to have an impression, as I knew him, of that great English gentleman and lovable ruler, Rajah Sir Charles Brooke.

These pages have brought back to me incidents of some years ago that are likely to be lost in the rush of modern times.

Men and circumstances out East are changing fast. I like to linger on the happy memory of interesting people: Dyaks, Malays, Muruts and so on, who in my day had not yet succumbed to modern progress.

A. B. Ward
[1934]

CHAPTER I

My earliest ambition was the army. Like most boys of my generation I could muster an imposing array of leaden troops splendid in the showy uniforms of those times. I fancied myself dressed in a red tunic, and a silvery helmet of foreign origin, complete with a horsehair mane. Happy hours I spent doing sentry duty on the home lawn. But it was not to be. A military career was beyond the parental means. An adventurous life in the East, preferably India, was the next best objective. It was the era of romance and imagination, with the wide world open to those of a stout heart. A modern youth may be more confined, more practical; he would like his career thrown at him, rather than risk going afield to find what it has to give him. And of course we now live in the mechanical age. Like many others I decided to try for the Indian Civil Service, so read up a lot of subjects with, I fear, very little advantage. My farseeing parents, not altogether trusting in my chances, luckily kept their ears open, with the result that shortly after my eighteenth birthday, they heard of a coffee planter in Malaya who required an apprentice. They put the proposition before me. Anything out East was the same to me. I jumped at it. Arrangements were made, and in November 1897 I sailed for Singapore in the Japanese ship "Tamba Maru." My fare was in the region of £36, almost incredible in an inflationary world.

My feelings at leaving were somewhat mixed. In the excitement of the moment, I scarcely realized that it meant separation from home for the space of years; but as the ship cast off, there was a momentary jar when I stood at the rails and felt I was being dragged into an abyss, so much so that a passing steward with well meant kindness stopped to give a word of cheer, "I know what it is to leave home for the first time, but you'll soon get over it." I did get over it. I enjoyed that voyage immensely, it was all so strange and thrilling. We numbered some forty passengers. My cabin mate was another youngster likewise going out to be a "creeper" on Larkin's plantation.

There was a girl of about fifteen of Spanish extraction, to whom I became very devoted, and there was H.R.A. Day and his wife. Day was in the service of the Rajah of Sarawak. It was then I first heard of the country that was to occupy such a large slice of my life. The romance, the uniqueness, of that little known State fascinated me from the beginning.

It took us twelve days to reach Port Said. This place had not been cleaned up then, and ruffianism was fairly rampant. There were tales of passengers being forcibly intimidated and robbed, and the foulest dens of infamy cumbered the town. Still my first glimpse of the East was full of interest. The black garbed Egyptian women, the occasional camels, the crazy looking native hovels with their still more crazy balconies, were just what one would expect in the Orient. And the smells! There was nothing much to do in Port Said, buy cigarettes, lunch at the Eastern Exchange Hotel, and visit the Mosque. We went in a party to the latter. We donned enormous slippers of the bedroom type, to prevent our feet from desecrating the building. I profaned the sanctity of the place by irrepressible laughter as our heaviest passenger floundered precariously along the floor in a skating motion.

The passage down the Canal was impressive under a full moon. There was an eerie stillness as the ship slowly glided on a ribbon through a frame of silvery desert. Here and there were dotted flat-roofed cabins in an oasis of obscure green; fitful lights gleamed as the vessel passed. We stood at the rails speaking in hushed tones, inexplicably awed by the sense of space.

At Aden, of course, the Tanks were visited. They were of great antiquity, so were the table appointments in the hotel we patronized. It was the custom to leave the remnants of one meal until the next came along, much to the satisfaction of millions of flies. From Aden we steamed direct to Singapore. Christmas Day was a break in the monotony. I kept the dinner menu, because it gave a list of all the eatables in the ship. The Captain's reception on the bridge was marred by a heavy swell, and many ladies decided that Christmas should be relegated to a hoary past.

The last day of the year we were in Singapore, passing the strait of many islets, threading our way through a maze of steamers, merchant ships, junks, and tugs, wearing the flags of all nations.

Metcalfe Larkin was there to meet us. As he came on board, I saw the prototype of an old-fashioned English farmer, in an unheard of attire, in an incongruous setting. He was a tall stoutish figure, a thin somewhat florid face with kindly grey eyes, and a sparse white beard clinging to his chin. He wore a button up khaki tunic, wide khaki trousers, uncomfortably starched, an enormous topee, and as an invariable companion, a shiny Chinese paper umbrella.

Larkin started tea planting in Formosa, but having the restless nature of planters in those early days, wandered around until he found himself in Johore, quite content to finish his

lifetime on his Castlewood coffee estate. He was known throughout the Malayan peninsula for his full-hearted kindness and good nature. One could not help being amazed at a man who never lost his temper, and smiled at every whim of fortune.

In Singapore we always stayed at the Hotel de l'Europe, that was before it became an establishment "de luxe." It consisted of a series of verandahed bungalows, mostly bachelors' quarters, extending from the corner of the High Street to the Cathedral. The dining room at the High Street end had a wide raised verandah, where everyone met for "stengahs" (a small whisky) or "pahits" (gin and bitters). The beauty of a stengah centered in the fact that you handled the whisky bottle, and there was no one to cry "enough." When planters came to the Straits in hundreds they stopped that happy custom. In the evening, from the verandah, you watched the carriage parade round the Esplanade. It was the accepted recreation of Singapore's élite, a roundabout of youth, beauty, and ostentatious wealth. Europeans driving spirited horses in traps and buggies; wealthy Chinamen, and Arabs, lolling in turn-outs that put Hyde Park into the shade. Malay syces liveried in white with coloured sashes and caps; others clad in more somber blue; some even in gold braided hussar uniforms; while occasionally a Government House equipage would pass with royal scarlet livery. It was a wonderful exhibition, now alas, given over to the burr of motor engines. In the nineties anyone who wished to be included in Singapore's "Who's Who" had to be keen on horses. Most of the animals came from Australia as "griffins," great wacking Walers as a rule. The biggest horse repository was owned by Abrams, known everywhere as "Daddy." He came out, I believe, in the seventies, as coachman to the Governor, and must have been about sixty when I knew him, a real type of the old fashioned horsey man. He was full of vivacious humor, was accepted everywhere, and could be most entertaining in any circle. Abrams dealt in horseflesh with much success until the advent of the motor car, when the repository became a motor garage. Such is the irony of fate.

I had a generous supply of letters of introduction to people in Singapore, and in consequence was, among others, invited to dine at the house of one of the Judges. Not knowing the geography of the town I put myself in the hands of the hotel porter, who gave directions to the gharry driver. Arriving at the house, I was ushered upstairs where the party had already assembled. The hostess came forward whom I greeted effusively, though I did notice she appeared slightly bewildered. While drinking a glass of sherry, the host took me quietly aside, politely enquired my name, and at the same time introduced himself. To my horror he was not my dinner host at all. Explanations followed, everyone enjoyed the contre-temps except myself, a trap was ordered and I was despatched to the real

destination, arriving in the middle of dinner. All this was very disconcerting to a shy young man, anxious to make a good impression from the first.

Robinson, my cabin companion, and fellow "creeper," joined me on the journey to Johore. The trunk railway through the Peninsula had not yet been decided on. We engaged rickshas in Singapore with two Chinese coolies apiece, one in the shafts, one pushing, and trundled the 14 miles by road to Kranji, on the verge of the Johore Strait. Those ricksha coolies did the journey in about two hours, stopping once at a half-way house, where they squatted on the ground, wiped the sweat from themselves with a filthy rag, rinsed their mouths with water, and took refreshment from a bowl, shoving the rice into their gaping jaws with chopsticks. At Kranji, a tiny Malay village, with a police station, we bundled into a Chinese "sampan," and were rowed across the Strait to Johore Bharu. The whole view as we saw it from the water was enchanting. In the foreground was the Sultan's group of palaces, the Istana, an imposing collection of dead white buildings, standing in park-like grounds. To the right was the Chinese Bazaar, and commercial part of the town. To the left the marble Mosque crowned a rising, following by undulating green hills culminating in the height of Gunong Pulai. Russet brown native houses extended inland, peeping out here and there amid the universal verdure. After the best part of an hour in an open boat on the Johore Strait under a broiling sun, the coolness of the Johore Club was heavenly. This building had been originally intended for a fish market, and stood on piles over a small lagoon. It got a good deal of custom from parties who used to drive over from Singapore, tiffin at the Club, and return in the cool of the evening.

Our arrival coincided with a garden party at Datu Meldrum's, a dear old Scotsman, who owned the Steam Saw mills, and was well over his three score years and ten. Robinson and I, heavily attired in homespun serge, sat and sweltered, vaguely wondering if the exudation would leave sufficient of us for the brilliant careers we had visualized.

Castlewood was about nine miles from Johore Bharu. The bungalow was considered rather a pretentious residence for a planter in those days. It was an oblong wooden building on brick piers, roofed with palm leaf "atap," surrounded by a ten-foot verandah. The oblong was divided into five equal rooms, all intercommunicating, with open latticework topping off the walls, cool and airy, but not conducive to privacy. Each bedroom had a well sunk in the floor, which led to the bathroom, a dark, snakey, cellar with a water tub in one corner, and the rest of the space cluttered up with sacks of coffee beans, old packing cases, and bric-a-brac. For the sake of the uninitiated I may explain that in Malaya you never used a bath, you stood

alongside a tub or jar, and poured the water over you with a dipper; if all was well the waste water ran away through a convenient gutter.

The life of a coffee planter would not be called strenuous, but it was monotonous. We were up with the dawn, breakfast (hard boiled eggs, with hard baked toast), then out into the fields to see if the coolies were working. The majority, if at work, would be weeding, that is, hoeing the weeds and burying them beneath the trees to provide a natural fertilizer. The growth of vegetation was so rapid in the moist heat that weeding was in constant process, it being a matter of pride for planters to keep their gardens clean. Before the morning breeze came along it was piping hot walking the hard crusted plantation roads. One instinctively edged towards the pulping shed. Here the coffee fruit was passed through a magnified chaffing machine, turned by hand; this tore off the husk from the bean, discharging the fragments into a trench of running water which washed them into large tanks. The beans sank to the bottom while the useless husks floated to the top, to be bailed out and thrown away. After several washings, the beans were collected and taken to the bungalow compound to be dried in the sun on large mats. If rain came on, as it did more often than not, heavy leaf awnings were hurriedly pulled over them. When sufficiently dried, the beans were taken to another shed where they were pounded in a series of sunken mortars by heavy mallets pivoted on a cross bar, and worked by the stamping of coolies' feet. By this laborious method the parchment skin, possessing a bitter taste, was removed. That completed the process, and the coffee was ready for market. Having made our tour and seen all there was to be seen, we most decidedly needed a bath. Then came tiffin, a bounteous meal that always included curry, and for drink, claret and gingerbeer, a really excellent beverage in the tropics, but one I have never met with outside Castlewood. There followed a siesta, considered then an indisputable custom of the East, tea, and out again in the fields until dusk, like a curtain hurriedly drawn, fell suddenly about the hour of six. Another gloriously cool bath prepared us for dinner. We dressed for this event, that is we discarded our working khaki, and clothed ourselves in fancy pyjamas, or the even more gorgeous Malay sarong. Larkin, in his role of lord and master, rounded off his dinner with port and a gingerbread nut; the understrappers might luxuriate on the biscuits, but not the port. Scarcely a word was ever spoken after the evening meal; relaxed in long chairs we improved our minds with such literature as the place provided. Larkin's taste in this respect was peculiar. I never saw him read a book, but he devoured the "Weekly Times," "Reynolds Weekly" and "Ally Sloper's Half Holiday." I deeply lament the demise of the last mentioned journal. Tootsie, with her wasp-like waist, and saucer eyes, pictured my beau ideal of feminine loveliness for quite a long time.

A coffee plantation in flower was a grand sight; it only lasted for a day or two, but the profusion of white blossoms extending for acres was staggering. When the berries ripened, looking like giant holly, it heralded a busy time. Men, women, and children all turned to the picking. Our coolies were Javanese, obtained through a system of advances. Being good Mohammedans the Javanese were anxious to make the holy pilgrimage to Mecca. Having got as far as Singapore, many found they had insufficient means to proceed, so they borrowed from Arab money lenders. On their return from Mecca, they and their debts were passed on to estate owners who deducted an agreed amount from their wages. When the debt was paid the cooly was free to return to his country. The system seemed to please everyone. There was no restraint put on the coolies; they were invariably happy, worked as well as most Asians, and never gave any trouble. In fact many having discharged their debts elected to remain and work on the estate. We worked every day of the week except Friday, the Mohammedan Sunday, when the coolies trooped into Johore Bharu to attend service at the Mosque. That day was usually our opportunity to visit the town for the week's supply of stores and to lunch at the Club. We drove there in a gharry drawn by one of Larkin's Deli ponies, a little brown rat of a thing that refused to budge if anyone got into the carriage at a standstill. The method was for the syce to force the pony into a trot, then we made flying leaps into the vehicle, hopelessly precipitating ourselves on the top of each other. Larkin came off best, his weight completely eclipsing our more youthful agility. Once started nothing would stop that little beast until we reached our destination, which had to be the Johore Club one way, and Castlewood the other.

CHAPTER II

Coffee was in a bad way. Prices had sagged and planters were having a hard business to make ends meet; but Larkin, ever optimistic, was proceeding to open up a new plantation farther up the Tebrau to be known as the Mount Austin Estate, called, I believe, after a hotel in Hong Kong in which one of the directors had a large interest.

In this year also Mr. Ridley,¹ head of the Singapore Botanical Gardens, began talking of the possibilities of Para rubber. He came to Castlewood and Larkin was considerably impressed. There was a big demand for seeds from the Para trees in the Gardens originally planted there about 1877, and through Ridley's good offices Larkin was enabled to procure a few hundred seeds not deemed sufficiently good to send elsewhere. We had special nurseries made, and fostered the seedlings with infinite care, watching their progress daily. At length the time arrived for the young plants to be put out. With some nervousness we planted them among the coffee trees, covering, as a first start, about 60 acres. That rubber garden brought Larkin a handsome sum of money when he sold it ten or twelve years later. Mount Austin was eventually planted in rubber and is today a well-known estate. I like to think I had a hand in creating one of the original rubber gardens in Malaya, though at the time no one dreamed what a vast industry was to spring from these small beginnings.

Shortly after we had settled in, we were invited to dine with the Sultan. Sultan Ibrahim had succeeded Sultan Abu Bakar in 1895. He was a fine figure of a man, over six feet and amply proportioned, a great sportsman, a good shot, and an experienced horseman who took keen interest in racing. All tigers in Johore were reserved for his gun, and he shot them on foot. The Sultan's catch phrase as he stalked into the Club in "jodpurs," a dingy jacket and a handkerchief tied loosely round the throat, was, "I am only a stable boy - Have a drink!" Abu Bakar had been well loved. He was the traditional Malay rajah, easy going, generous, and dignified. But during his rule the Malay officials had become very lax, and bribery and

1. Henry Ridley, known to skeptical coffee planters as "Mad Ridley" or "Rubber Ridley" was the indefatigable early prophet of rubber cultivation in Malaya. He was Director of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore, from 1888 and made several contributions to rubber technology.

corruption were not uncommon. Sultan Ibrahim, who had learned Western ways in England determined to alter all that. He was a live wire, here, there and everywhere, drilling his troops, administering justice in the Courts, supervising public works. On the monthly pay day he sat in the Treasury, and personally signed every voucher for payment. By this means everyone received the money due to him.

The Johore military forces consisted of some Sikh artillery and Malay infantry. The Sultan also instituted a Volunteer force in which every able-bodied man had to serve. It amounted to compulsory volunteering, if such a thing is possible, and the force became remarkably efficient owing to the drastic penalties imposed for any dereliction of duty. The Sultan set the example himself by personally supervising the exercises, and on the whole the drill and discipline were beneficial to the ease-loving Malay youth.

Johore, at the time I am speaking of, was an independent State; it was not till some years later that a British Adviser was appointed. As is usual in native States, intrigue was always underlying movements in the political circle. One evening two or three of us received a sudden invitation to dine with the Sultan. Besides ourselves there were half a dozen Malay officials among whom, to our surprise, was one holding a high position, but who was scarcely "persona grata" with his ruler. The dinner proceeded on ordinary lines until the dessert stage. At this juncture the Sultan rose to make a vehement speech accusing a Minister of intriguing to do him ill, even to poisoning, emphasizing special points by shattering wine glasses. The unfortunate man, huddled in his chair like a terror-stricken monkey, dared neither to move nor to speak. At last the tirade was over, the victim slunk away and we breathed afresh. The Sultan chuckled and I heard him say, "That's all right now; he's had a lesson he won't forget." I realized that we had been spectators of a staged play; and from what I heard afterwards the Sultan was justified in this action. Asiatic despots had to exercise an amount of ingenuity to hold their own.

State functions were common in Johore, and the Sultan's birthday always entailed a week's celebration, including an Investiture in the Throne Room, reviews and banquets. On these occasions the State regalia was paraded, spears of pure gold, and age-old krisses in sheaths encrusted with gems. At State dinners too the famous Ellenborough gold plate would decorate the tables. Malay officials wore gorgeous uniforms plastered with the medals and orders that Johore liberally provided. Military officers were resplendent in white and gold lace, while the Sultan himself blazed with diamond buttons and a diamond aigrette on his fez. Civilians were expected to wear evening dress. Nothing, I swear, shatters one's self-esteem so much as

when a dress suit immaculate by night is brought into the glare of a tropical sun.

In February of that year (1898) Prince Henry of Prussia came over to stay a night as the guest of the Sultan. He was on his way to China to represent his brother's "Mailed fist." After dinner that evening an English Naval lieutenant sat down at the piano and sang comic songs, in which the Prince joined heartily and enjoyed himself immensely.

The Sultan had a few Englishmen in his service. The three brothers Ker were an integral part of the community. They were sons of Mr. William W. Ker who founded the well-known firm of Paterson Simons in Singapore, but having lost touch with the business were taken into the Johore Service by Sultan Abu Bakar. Dr. Wilson controlled the Medical Department. The Club was a rendezvous for most of the pioneer planters. They represented the Bohemians of the East, suffering ups and downs, yet carefree. They lived for the present, dispensed liberal hospitality, were "hail-fellow-well-met" with everyone. It is possible that a softer generation might shake its head at the stimulants considered necessary to withstand a trying climate. A planter in those days lived a lonely life in the jungle, miles from the amenities of civilization, vastly different from the advantages of motor roads, telephones, and wireless, that self-respecting planters would expect in these times; so when these old die-hards did come back to club life for a few days, they knew how to enjoy themselves. Halliday of Kota Tinggi, J.H.M. Staples, Gawler, the brothers Watson are just a few of those who have left their names on the foundation stone of Malayan planting.

Larkin was contractor to the Government for the upkeep of all the country roads, and after I had been with him six months he gave me the task of supervising this work. He also gave me \$25 a month pocket money, a generous gesture because the premium I paid was supposed to cover board, lodging, and other extras.

The highways of Johore consisted of a road running 20 miles north to Kota Tinggi, a stretch of some five miles across the Sedili River to Gunong Pantl, and a road going westward to Gunong Pulai. None of these main arteries were metalled, and they were kept serviceable for bullock cart traffic, the only means of transport, by gangs of Javanese coolies, who prevented weeds from choking the fairway, dug out the ditches, and repaired the wooden bridges. Each five miles had its coolie gang living in a native house under its mandor or foreman.

My road inspection progress was undertaken in a primitive caravan, nothing but a cumbersome springless, covered in, bullock cart with wooden seats, across which planks were laid

to carry my mattress; the space under this flooring held my stores. The wierd vehicle was drawn by two bullocks fondly imagined to be of the trotting variety; actually they averaged a speed of about two miles an hour. When I got tired of reclining in the jolting cart, it was possible to get out and walk on ahead, with a rest at the roadside every now and then to let it catch up. We used to cover some ten miles a day, putting up for the night at a cooly house.

I never tired of those nights in central Johore. Picture me surfeited with a curry produced by the mandor's wife, such a curry as only a Javanese can make, lying on my mattress vaguely absorbing the low murmur from beyond the partition, where the coolies gossiped in hushed tones, sensing outside the vast encircling jungle, home of strange stirring life. To me, nature at her wildest is most soothing; there is no such lullaby as the incessant whispering of curious insects, or the haunting call of a night bird.

On my wanderings I always carried a gun, with the hope that something might come my way. There is little chance of finding game to shoot in dense virgin forest, but if one was lucky an occasional green pigeon might be spotted on an ara tree in a clearing.

As one got farther north near Kota Tinggi the road ran through swampy land, and here the track was formed of small tree trunks laid side by side, corduroy fashion. It would not have taken motor cars, but bullock carts bumped gaily over it; personally I preferred to use my legs on this portion of the road.

On the farther side of the Sedili River (crossed by a ferry, there was no bridge), it was virgin forest with a grass ride threaded through it. This was my favorite bit: the closely cut green road with a dark wall of trees on each side, like a stately avenue leading to a giant's castle, at the turns, a glimpse of the wooded slopes of Gunong Panti.

The cooly house of this section was in a clearing hollowed out of the jungle, with a garden planted with tapioca and sugar cane. There was no other habitation for miles. One night we were awakened by a commotion outside--rending, scrunching, and snorting. Every now and then there was a bump against the posts, and the flimsy house shook. Huddled together, the frightened coolies began to whisper of ghosts; but the mandor, more enlightened, said "Gajah!"--elephants. I suggested a shot would scare them off; the coolies however implored me to do nothing of the sort. They said the beasts would stampede, and the house be bowled over in their panic. So in the end nothing was done, while we spent a sleepless and anxious night. In the morning

we found the herd had laid the garden low, not a stick of tapioca or sugar cane was left.

Elephants seemed to take a fiendish delight in breaking through bridges. One gang of men repaired a bridge six consecutive days, because an elephant turned up each night and put his foot through it. He might have gone on doing it, only I suppose the game got stale. Occasionally we saw the tracks of rhino, but curiously enough I never came across traces of tiger in this part.

While doing one of my walking tours along this Panti road we found an encampment of shelters made of freshly cut leaves and boughs, under which squatted groups of what looked like a species of ape. The males wore a strip of beaten bark cloth round their loins, the females were stark naked; they were all diminutive in size and covered with skin disease. As we approached, the women and children made as if to flee away, but were restrained by a bearded old man in a dirty sarong. The old headman spoke a few words of Malay explaining they were Sakais bringing jungle produce to barter for salt and sugar with the Chinese traders of Kota Tinggi. The Sakais are as primitive as any race of humans; aborigines of the Malayan Peninsula, they are split up into tribes of nomads living in the dense forests of the hinterland in leaf huts and even in nests in the trees. They never stay long in one place and are rarely seen, subsisting for the most part on jungle fruits and birds and beasts they slay with blowpipes and poisoned darts.

I am constantly asked if I ever met with tiger. At Castlewood, tigers were often heard at night hunting wild pig in the coffee fields, and no one who has not listened to the howl of a tiger balked of its prey can realize what a blood curdling cry it is. We found the dead body of one of Larkin's ponies one morning close to the bungalow. It had escaped in panic from the stable and fallen to a roving tiger. Going the round of the fields, my path led through a belt of scrub. I have passed along and returned ten minutes later to find the fresh spoor of a tiger crossing the road. It made one rather jumpy to imagine the beast watching one's movements only a few yards away and the sole weapon at one's disposal a Chinese umbrella. All the same I never did see a tiger in the wild state, but Dr. Wilson told me he turned the corner of a road to walk right on to one. Both stood petrified for a moment or so and then His Feline Highness calmly stalked away. It was rare for humans to be attacked. An old Chinaman who lived in a wattle shanty on the estate had a tale that two tigers perambulated round and round his hut one night seeking an entrance; if they had only leaned against the wall it must have given way. There was a strict regulation prohibiting the

destruction of tigers, because they were reserved for the Sultan to shoot. I believe this Order was rescinded when the brutes increased and became a real danger.

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For a year I continued the daily routine on the coffee estate, varied only by the road inspections. Then a change came.

Michelson had to abandon his garden at Pulai owing to bad times, and the Sultan, in the kindness of his heart, found a contract for him to remetal some roads in Johore Bharu. Larkin also had a finger in the pie and sent me along to act as assistant road-maker. Everything was fixed up; supplies of laterite arranged for, numbers of Tamil coolies engaged. And then Michelson got ill. The contract had barely run a month when he died in Singapore. I was stranded with a job of Tamils, some thousands of cubic feet of stone, and no more notion how to make a road than a bank clerk.

Larkin, blind to anything except that the contract was too good to lose, insisted it was all quite easy, "Just see that the coolies throw the stuff on the road. They know what to do. You'll be all right." I was not so optimistic. However there was nothing for it but to do my best. The next few months are stamped in my mind as the most unsatisfactory I ever experienced. Luckily I had a Malay clerk who spoke English, and the Tamil overseers knew their job.

I was out all day sweating in the heat, inciting the coolies to further efforts; the more I ranted, the more they enjoyed the joke. I puzzled my brain measuring cubic contents with the aid of Whitaker's Almanack. I went nearly crazy unravelling hieroglyphics that might be either payments or advances. I worked out paysheets until my head whirled in a nightmare of ciphers. I cannot imagine how I balanced my accounts; nevertheless I managed to submit some sort of financial statement to Larkin on his weekly visits. I feel sure he did not understand them any better than I did. He never questioned anything, paid up without a murmur, and smilingly told me to carry on.

Bit by bit we progressed, though we never finished any section in schedule time. The Sultan came along in his trap, asked how we were getting on, gave me invitations to dinner, and drove off brimming over with cordiality and good-naturedness. The Malay Public Works officials came along, smiled, and went their way.

Thus we continued, until in the course of time we had reconstructed about two miles of road. At this point the Johore

Government came to the conclusion that the contract might go on forever, so it was very politely suggested that the Public Works Department could perhaps handle the undertaking better themselves. Larkin, always amenable, fell in with this great idea at once. To my inexpressable joy and relief my career as a road-mender came to an end and I found myself back at Castlewood.

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Larkin was getting more and more worried about the slump in coffee. I think the responsibility of having brought me out to a profitless occupation weighed a good deal on his mind. We did not even consider rubber at that early stage. We discussed many schemes, but Sarawak somehow held my thoughts; that enigmatic country led my longings like a loadstar. As luck would have it Larkin knew Sir Charles Brooke and there and then he wrote recommending me to the Rajah's notice. It acted like a charm. The Rajah replied asking me to call on him in his yacht "Zahora" at Singapore.

It was a callow youth in a state of perspiring trepidation that found himself at the end of Johnston's Pier on the appointed day. A marine policeman pointed out the Rajah's yacht lying in the Roads. I saw a black-hulled two-funneled ship flaunting colors at the stern and mast head that struck a distinctive mark among the dingy flags of other nations, black and red cross on a vivid yellow ground. It took ages in a Chinese "sampan" to reach "Zahora's" anchorage. Going on board I was told to wait in the fore part of the ship. It was terribly hot and I was terribly nervous; the sweat had already ruined my collar, my garments clammily stuck to my skin. Before long I began to wonder if I had been forgotten. A jacketless young man was leaning over the side, evidently a steward. I touched him on the shoulder. "I say, do you think the Rajah can see me?" He scarcely moved. "Oh! I think so," he murmured, and turned again to watch the gulls snatch refuse from the water. I decided the Rajah's stewards were casual. In another minute or so the Rajah himself appeared. Close on his seventieth birthday, no one would have given him a day over sixty, his actions were so brisk, his bearing so upright. He was short in stature. His hair, though white, was thick, curling round his ears and neck in abundant locks; his white moustache was full and long, rather prominent in a small thin face. But what held my attention was the high forehead, and the grey searching eyes, deep set under bushy brows.

I learned to respect the Brooke eyes in the course of many years. They twinkled in humor, softened in kindness, but they were terrible in anger, hard as steel and cold as ice. Looking

back one must admit that the Rajah had idiosyncrasies with regard to his dress, but so overwhelming was the pervading personality of the human factor that minor details passed unnoticed. It was the Rajah, not a mere man, one visualized.

His blue serge coat with the invariable buttonhole of honeysuckle was impeccable, but his white duck trousers ironed with the crease at the sides, Naval fashion, flapped about the top of his boots, elastic-sided ones, of the kind known as "Jemimasa"

We talked for some time on various matters, though not a word was said about the object of my visit. I was hurriedly searching my mind for an opportunity to bring the conversation to the point, when the Rajah suddenly rose and held out his hand to bid me goodbye. "I am returning to Sarawak tomorrow," he said. "I will take you with me; you can then see if you would like to stay. Be aboard at ten tomorrow morning." For a moment my breath failed me, then I managed to stammer that I had come totally unprovided for an immediate departure. The Rajah was a trifle upset. "Very well then, take the mail boat in three days' time," and as an afterthought he added, "Bring some dress shirts with you."

As I was about to go down the gangway the Rajah called the young man hanging over the side, "My son, the Rajah Muda." I felt an utter fool, but Sarawak my dream was becoming true.

CHAPTER III

The German ship "Vorwärts" took me across to Sarawak. She made a fortnightly run between Singapore and Kuching, constituting the only means of communication between Sarawak and the outside world.

Captain Bruhn was likewise a German whose bulkiness did not belie his joviality and hospitality.

My recollection of the voyage is chiefly limited to pickles, great jars of varied pickles that held the place of honor down the center of the saloon table at all times. Whether they were there as a corrective, or incentive, for seasickness, I could never make up my mind; the weather being favorable, however, they certainly excited a lively thirst for the ship's bottled beer, "Key" brand from Bremen. So they had their use.

Within forty-eight hours we were in sight of the Sarawak river. Imagine the thrill with which I saw the coast of my fairyland for the first time. It did not disappoint my expectations.

On the right glistens a curve of yellow sand backed with a fringe of wind-tossed feathery casuarinas, then sloping upwards a mass of treetops, rounded blots of sage and olive and emerald green, with here and there a red or yellow bloom, mounting to the fretted ridge of Tanjong Po where a whitewashed lighthouse guards the entrance.

Beyond this rise other wooded hills merge into hazy blue, forming a stepping ladder to where Santubong lifts its jungled point in the distance. On the left, the coast extends a blanket of dark mangrove towards the hills of Lingga. Ahead, in the far interior, are mystic blue mountain ranges flecked with light and shadow.

The river is broad at its mouth, the low banks hidden with mangrove and rustling nipa palms. Farther along one passes occasional clearings with a cluster of brown-roofed Malay huts standing on slender posts, so near to the edge, that the rising tide sweeps beneath their piles. The main river branches at Pending, where there was a little white signal station, a flagstaff and a notice board with a painted arrow showing the way "TO KUCHING."

From this point there is more life, the clearings and riverside houses are more frequent, canoes dart here and there;

we pass native schooners being towed upriver, fishing boats paddled by bare-chested Malays, or a Chinese "bandong" with her sails flopping, propelled by four long sweeps.

Soon the banks on each side are a broken line of huts and sheds and rickety landing piers; women bathe from some; brown mites of children tumble shouting into diminutive canoes, wave their tiny paddles, and push off for a toss in the wash of the steamer.

Round a bend and Kuching lies before us. A glaring white fort with square gun ports crowns a grassy knoll. Across the river, hugging the bank, are rows of schooners, lighters, and mat-roofed boats; sampans crisscross the fairway. A busy hum comes from the Chinese Bazaar lining the front, white-faced shops with gaudy shutters, roofed with red tiles of odd curves. Across the "five foot way" stretch canvas awnings lettered with weird Chinese characters. Rickshas thread their way noiselessly through the animated street, while creaking bullock carts ponderously hold the road.

The "Vorwärts" anchored in midstream opposite the Astana, the Rajah's palace, which stands aloof in its terraced grounds, a building that seems all roof, with beneath its eaves an impression of squat arches and a balustraded verandah. The main entrance, however, is a square castellated keep, impressive yet incongruous, a bit of feudal England pitchforked into an Asiatic setting.

Facing the Astana from across the river are the Government Offices in another style, with white-pillared colonnades and a diminutive clock tower. Kuching has many open spaces, public gardens with bright flowers and well-kept laws--a little model metropolis of a model State.

The Police took me in hand as soon as I arrived. That is to say, the Superintendent, Captain Daubeney, smoothed the way for me, told me where to stay, and what to do. Daubeney was an enthusiast. He would take the lead in everything, games, theatricals, social gatherings, or racing, and nothing was a real success without his co-operation.

The back of the Rest House where I was quartered overlooked Daubeney's bungalow. One night on hearing loud cries of wrath, and female protestations, proceeding from his verandah, we thought we ought to investigate. We saw Mrs. Daubeney cringing on the floor, imploring mercy, while her husband menaced her with a stick. "You wicked woman! You wicked woman!" he repeated time after time.

Ought we to interfere, or should we let them settle their own domestic differences? Anyhow, we agreed to stand by so

that Mrs. Daubeney should not suffer any injury. Then Daubeney, still inanely repeating "You wicked woman!" picked up a book to see what came next. We were watching the rehearsal of a striking situation in a melodrama.

The Rest House, a low-roofed bungalow, gloomy and dingy, was alongside the Esplanade gardens where the band played ticed a week.

The Rajah was a great lover of music, particularly of the classical type. I have always heard that he used to sing a lot in his younger days. The band of Manila men was an excellent one, and the Rajah made it his custom to attend the performances; likewise members of the European community thought it their duty to turn up occasionally, the ladies in their best frocks, the men most uncomfortable in "Store" clothes and "hardboiled" collars. The old Rajah would sit huddled up on an iron bench, a faraway look in his eyes, beating time to the music with his cane, round him a group of bored men and women wishing they were playing tennis or golf, racking their brains for something interesting to talk about during the next interval.

The Club was the meeting place for the men. Ladies were not admitted. It was not until twenty-five years later that women were deemed worthy of associating with the sterner sex in their club life. The Club house of those days was rather like a barn with a verandah—a large room containing two billiard tables, a mammoth round table displaying the six-weeks-old English periodicals, and the indispensable bar in one corner. There was a bowling alley and two tennis courts of a gravelly nature. After dark and when the oil lamps were lit the Clubites formed a circle in proximity to the bar, and as each newcomer arrived he pushed a chair in until some twenty or more were gathered round. Conversation was limited to two or three seniors; drinks were called for and the "boy" sent round to find out individual preferences. No one had the courage to refuse. That drink finished, another kept the ball rolling, and so it went on.

Of all the most dreary and stupid conventions, that vicious circle beat them all. No one wanted to drink at another's expense without returning the compliment, and if one attempted to keep out of the circle it was an act of heinous unsociability. No doubt much more alcohol was consumed in those days. It was cheap, for one thing, and there was little else to do after darkness had fallen than to talk and drink. Bridge has been one of the greatest temperance reformers in Eastern club life. In the Outstations it was easy for men to regulate their drinks, but where more than two or three were gathered together the opportunity existed for giving way, and sooner or later the majority paid the toll.

After a dinner or other jollification the company used to go on to the Club, form a circle, and practice community singing; but custom decreed that nimble fellows should try and clamber round the walls of the room without touching the floor. It was not an easy task, there was little to hang on to, doorways to swing across, rickety bookcases to climb over.

I accomplished it once, and in the heat of success tried it again, but a lamp bracket gave way and I was lucky to escape serious injury to my back.

My first job of work was in the Treasury under Mr. Brooke Johnson, the Rajah's nephew. I had to copy into big ledgers the monthly cash accounts sent in from the Outstations. It was not inspiring work, but some items whetted the imagination. "Rewards for killing crocodiles 33 ft. at 16 cents"; "gin and tobacco for Dyak chiefs." Once I found a mistake in an addition, and that was a Red Letter day.

The Rajah came over to the Offices every morning. This entailed a little ceremony. The Rajah, as usual in his blue serge coat and white trousers, always wore a buttonhole of honeysuckle and a magenta-colored pugaree round his white helmet. All the senior officers sported white helmets of the type peculiar to the French Foreign Legion in films, but the magenta pugaree was reserved to the Rajah; he even had one on his felt Homburg. He carried a long silver-mounted staff; behind him a Sergeant of the Sarawak Rangers held aloft a considerably dilapidated yellow umbrella, while a Malay retainer, carrying books and a paper umbrella in case of rain, brought up the rear.

As the little procession advanced, guards turned out and presented arms; the Resident, the chief Administrative Officer, made a bolt from his room to greet the Rajah at the portico of the Government Building; and the head Native Officers, the four Datus, drew up in line to have their hands shaken. The Rajah then passed on to his office, where he was accessible to any person, native or European, who wished to see him.

The whole system of government in Sarawak was a personal and patriarchal rule. Sir James Brooke made the welfare of the people his religion when he so romantically became Rajah in 1840. His nephew, Sir Charles, faithfully carried on the tradition with almost fanatical zeal. The Rajah was no mere figurehead. He was the hub round which the State revolved, the mainspring of the whole mechanism. Nothing was too trivial for his attention, and nothing could be done without his knowledge. Personal rule is what the Asiatic respects and understands. He is not attuned to bureaucracy or government by a machine, that, however efficient, cannot be sympathetic to circumstances.

He wants government from a man who is human like himself and can understand his frailties. Personal rule means that ruler and ruled can meet on equal terms; there is accessibility to all, and red tape is unnecessary.

Only one man in a million or perhaps more, could sustain the role, and Sir Charles Brooke was that man. We may have smiled sometimes, or criticized his actions; they may have seemed petty or uncalled-for; all the same, they were part of the system, and in our hearts I think we almost worshipped him.

The Rajah was emphatic in his condemnation of most colonial administrations. In his opinion the European is too apt to exalt Western civilization to the exclusion of native principles, forcing homemade laws on reluctant people in place of their traditional customs. The right policy, he maintained, was to veto such native usages as are dangerous or unjust, and to ingraft western methods on eastern customs by a gradual and gentle process, always granted that the consent of the people was gained for such measures before they were put in force. Thus it will be understood that the native point of view was the first consideration in Sarawak, and nothing was done without the co-operation of the native chiefs.

That the system worked well is undeniable, and it was the testimony of various experts who studied eastern administrations that Sarawak provided a model of what Asiatic rule should be.

The Rajah issued his edicts in the form of Orders, simply drawn up and to the point, and if he commanded "that in future wooden shops in the Bazaar were to be built of brick" we all knew what he meant, and there were no lawyers then in the country to argue the wording.

Mrs C. A. Bampfylde was Resident, and had been in the Service since 1876. When stationed at Balleh Fort soon after joining he had rescued the Rajah from drowning. The Rajah and his party were proceeding up the river in the launch "Ghita" when they met a heavy freshet that forced the boat on to the bank and wrecked it. Everyone was swept overboard. The Rajah caught hold of a branch which snapped and he was sucked into a whirlpool. Bampfylde saw the catastrophe from the Fort, put off in a canoe, and was able to reach the Rajah just in time to save him.

After I had been in Kuching a fortnight Bampfylde asked me to tea; so far I had no definite appointment. He put me at my ease with pleasant conversation, and then informed me I was to take charge of the Government coffee gardens on Matang and Satap hills. I was in despair; my one idea in coming to Sarawak was to get away from coffee planting. I had so longed for a

post in the Civil Servicer I told Bampfylde so, but he seemed adamant. My hopes and dreams were all falling to the ground.

At last in desperation I said I did not consider eighteen months on a coffee estate sufficient experience, and if the Rajah persisted in sending me to Matang, I refused to be responsible for whatever happened. Bampfylde was not used to being spoken to like that; he saw me out of the Residency with a very frigid manner.

For two days I heard nothing further, then I received an official communication from the Rajah appointing me to the Sarawak Servicer. As a cadet my salary commenced at \$100² a month, with a fluctuating dollar, say £150 a year. Living was much cheaper in those days, especially in the outstations. I engaged an excellent Malay "boy" for \$6 a month, and my share of the mess bill upcountry did not amount to much more than \$5 a week, so it was possible to keep well within bounds with care, perhaps better than the present day cadet with his \$200 to \$250 a month.

In Kuching at this time there was a deal of talk of the strained relations between Sarawak and Brunei. Brunei was a small independent Malay Sultanate sandwiched between Sarawak territory, a wedge of land surrounded by the Baram and Limbang districts. Owing to the impotence of the Sultan and the rapaciousness of his headmen, Brunei, the former glory of Borneo, was in decay. The Pangirans or Chiefs battered on the country folk living on the Tutong and Belait rivers. These oppressed people had often approached the White Rajah, who they knew stood for freedom and justice, to aid them and they made no secret of the fact that they would welcome him as their ruler. It was one of Sir Charles Brooke's greatest ambitions to incorporate Brunei with Sarawak, and remove what was a blot on civilization and a canker in the heart of Sarawak. But his hands were tied because Brunei was a British Protectorate, and Britain seemed quite blind to the state of affairs there.

In 1890 the inhabitants of the Limbang river adjoining Brunei had been forced into revolt on account of the Sultan's cruelty and oppression. Hoisting the Sarawak flag, they appealed to the Rajah to take over the government of the district. After prolonged negotiations the British Government approved the annexation of Limbang. Brunei, however, having lost a happy

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2. The currency here is the Straits Dollar which was worth close to four shillings (sterling) during the last half of the nineteenth century. However, its value fluctuated severely in the 1890's and early 1900's. In 1906 it was attached to a gold standard and pegged at two shillings fourpence.

hunting ground, was very sore. In the year I am writing of, 1899, the inhabitants of the Tutong and Belait also attempted to cut themselves adrift from Brunei and place themselves under Sarawak.

The Sultan responded by sanctioning treacherous cruelty, and by retaliating on any Sarawak subjects that fell into his power.

The Rajah could stand it no longer, and we saw him steam away from Kuching in his yacht, with a detachment of Rangers and a 3-pounder Hotchkiss gun. Arriving at Brunei, the Rajah anchored opposite the Sultan's landing pier and trained his gun on the shed that did duty for a palace.

Meanwhile the British Consul in Labuan had got wind of the state of affairs, and chartering a launch made all speed to Brunei. He anchored the small steamer between "Zahora" and the palace, and after much argument was able to convince the Rajah of the folly of precipitate action.

The Consul said afterwards he suffered the most direful moments of his career expecting the Rajah to open fire. Had it not been for the Consul's intervention, the seventy-year-old Rajah and his little Company of native soldiers would not have hesitated to take action against the town and its 10,000 inhabitants.

There was no lack of pluck in Sir Charles. If he had accomplished his purpose whether for good or bad, the burning question of Brunei might have been solved there and then.

CHAPTER IV

The social element in Kuching was mainly represented by the government class, though the manager of the only European mercantile firm, the Borneo Company, did a lot of entertaining. There were one or two missionaries of the Anglican persuasion who kept a good deal to themselves, headed by Bishop Hose, who was everyone's friend. The Roman Catholic Mission did not concern themselves in society affairs. Altogether there were not more than thirty Europeans in the town, including six or seven ladies. Dinner parties constituted the most common form of social gatherings.

The Borneo Company's bungalow at Bukit Mata Kuching had a wonderful flooring of old "belian" wood that shone like polished ebony; you were requested to wipe your feet well before going upstairs, and at the door of the drawing room a very old retainer named Mariama always took his post to shake hands with the guests as they arrived.

Bridge, of course, was not known, and poker generally finished up the evenings. Port was never drunk after dinner; claret and sherry were handed round with the dessert. Judging from the standard of far eastern port as drunk in later days I believe the old practice might be reintroduced with considerable advantage to palates and heads.

The Rajah often entertained. Punctuality was a mania with him; he dined at eight, and as the time gun boomed forth, he led the way to the dining room, and woe betide anyone who was later. When staying at the Astana, it was not always easy to get away from the Club early, so to economize time I have often partially undressed in the boat going across the river, rushed through the Astana gardens clad in singlet and trousers, thrown on dress clothes, and panted up the Astana steps fastening odd buttons and studs just in time to join the rear of the procession going in to dinner.

On one occasion a young officer failed to turn up in time. We spread ourselves over his empty chair as well as we could, and he crawled in on his hands and knees under cover of the table, to pop up suddenly into his seat as soon as we gave him the signal that the Rajah's attention was occupied. Nothing, however, escaped the Rajah. As we rose from the table he called out, "I think, so-and-so, your trousers want dusting; you will find a brush on the verandah."

A feature of the Astana dinners was the presence of Rangers in uniform, stationed at intervals round the room bearing large palm-leaf fans of the type seen in pictures of Cleopatra; these were waved to and fro to cool the air as a substitute for the more usual creaking punkahs.

After dinner, if ladies were present, there was perhaps a little music, but at ten o'clock punctually the Rajah rose, shook hands, went off to bed, and left his guests to depart. If it was a men's party, the Rajah took his seat on a side verandah with the rest of the company in a line opposite him, all uncomfortably seated on iron benches. Conversation was desultory, and chiefly confined to the host and the principal guest. Occasionally, the Rajah would be full of talk of the day's doings, and sparks of dry humor would flash out. More often, his mind was concentrated on the immediate problems of the country, and he would ask questions of anyone who he thought could help him. It always reminded me of a class of schoolboys sitting in trepidation before their headmaster. I think most of us actually felt the same relationship.

One memorable dinner comes to mind. A distinguished gentleman was the Rajah's guest. It was Race Week, and the gentleman in question spent rather longer than he might have at the Club bar. Eight o'clock went; the Rajah without a moment's hesitation led us into the dining room. Alphonse, the butler, removed the extra cover, whispering that the guest was indisposed and gone to bed. We had finished the second course when I heard the Rajah mutter. Looking up, I saw our distinguished visitor supporting himself by the post of the service door. He staggered in, and the Rajah blandly waved him to a place at the bottom of the table. Seated, the guest thought he had better wake things up a bit, so carefully rolling his bread into a pile of ammunition, he proceeded to flick these pellets round the table. A contretemps in a cathedral makes merriment, but the sight of the Rajah dignified and courteous under a hail of bread pellets punctuated by dull thuds on stiff shirt fronts was irresistible. Taking our cue from the Rajah, not one of us dared to let his feelings go, and the agony of that meal remains with me to this day.

Sir Charles was a great admirer of the French, partly, I believe, because of his inherent distrust of British politicians, to whom he attributed the unwarrantable accusations brought against Sir James Brooke, and partly because he was steeped in the glamour of his god Napoleon Bonaparte, "the most remarkable genius of the world," as he often described him. In his spare time, he read French books, carefully enunciating each word out loud; he got his news of the world from "Le Figaro"; and he invariably spoke French to his valet Alphonse. On his many voyages to Europe and back the Rajah traveled by French liners. His objection to English mail-boats was due to the unfortunate

deaths in 1873 of three of his children in the P. & O. "Hydaspes" whilst sailing up the Red Sea. The poor children died one after another, and the Rajah always maintained they might have been saved if the ship had stopped to land them.

Notwithstanding the Rajah's fondness for France he preferred to spend the winter months in England. He had his house at Cirencester, and there he could indulge in his greatest passion, love of horses. There he drove his four-in-hand, and at the age of eighty-four was still out hunting with Earl Bathurst's hounds.

In Sarawak the Rajah was out riding every morning before six o'clock; in the cool of the evenings he used to drive a drag and pair, but in later days he came down to a little Governess-cart drawn by a favorite pony that was blind in one eye. The Rajah became likewise blind on one side, and when the two defective eyes happened to be in conjunction, the cart had many hair breadth escapes from the roadside ditches.

A favorite saying of the Rajah's was "A beautiful woman, a thoroughbred horse, and a well-designed yacht, are the three great joys of life."

* * * * *

After a month in Kuching I received orders to proceed immediately to Simanggang "to do duty under Mr. Bailey the Resident."

The Rajah never gave his officers much time to undertake a transfer. He had been brought up in the Navy, and considered it good discipline for men to be ready to go anywhere at a moment's notice. I was warned on joining the Service to keep a bag packed for eventualities. My appointment to Simanggang brought me many congratulations. It was considered the crack station of Sarawak for the reason that the Rajah himself had spent most of his early days in the district, officially known as the 2nd Division. He knew it intimately, both the country and the Malay and Dyak population. In fact, he loved the 2nd Division so much that he retained it as his own; consequently the Resident in charge could only act under the Rajah's direct orders.

D.J.S. Bailey arrived from home leave the day before we left. He was a big fair man with the heavy moustache that was fashionable in those days. Rather awe-inspiring to a newly joined cadet, he nevertheless proved a real friend to me. Bluff and burly I thought him at first, until I learned that his heart was kindness itself. He was absolutely wrapped up in the welfare of his district, but inclined to be a bit of a martinet if Dyaks made any trouble.

We sailed in "Lorna Doone," a small government steamer built mainly for cargo, that possesses a tiny deck cabin for passengers.

Out of the mouth of the Sarawak river, sweeping east we fringed the low-lying mangrove coast, passing the wide entrance to the Sadong river and the domed island of Burong where innumerable sea fowl made their homes undisturbed, except when startled into protesting clouds of white and grey and black by the throb of an occasional steamboat. Ahead lay the yawning mouth of the Batang Lupar river with its two protruding teeth, conical mounds, Big and Little Triso. Passing through, we were in our district.

In its lower reaches the Batang Lupar is three to four miles wide. For fifteen miles we chug-chugged against the stream, nothing to be seen on either side but shining mud banks topped by a dense mass of trees, not a house, or a clearing, not a sign of human life, only vegetation and a wide turbid river. Unexpectedly from the depth of the jungle we heard the rapid pulsation of a gong, and shooting through an unperceived break in the river, found ourselves opposite a small white-washed fort, with a grove of coconut palms sheltering a group of native huts set in oozy mud. An air of sleepiness hung over everything, even the palm leaves drooped dejectedly. But as "Lorna Doone" cast her anchor, two policemen in blue and red came off in a boat to ask our business. This was Lingga, where the Rajah had been stationed forty-five years before.

We stayed the night on board and saw the setting sun cast shadows on the flat-topped Lingga Mountain where the river found its source. We slept in a canvas tent rigged up on the main hatchway. In the morning the tips of my toes were raw and bleeding. "That is nothing," said Bailey, "it's only cockroaches."

The steamer could not proceed farther than Lingga. Two war-boats measuring fifty feet long were brought alongside for the journey upriver manned by twenty-five bronzed-backed Malay paddlers sitting cross-legged on a slatted deck; a portion towards the stern was reserved for the Tuan; here my mattress was arranged, and I crawled in under the "kajang" awning. A yell, and we shot away, the two boats racing along the reach.

There are no better paddlers than the Malays of the 2nd Division. A long sweeping stroke, a chonk, as the handles strike the gunwale in unison, a pause, as the boat swishes through the water, followed by another simultaneous dig of the paddles. It was music to the ears, the splash and tap of the wooden blades; it was rhythm to the eyes, the bend of the back, the up-flung arm, the muscles rippling under a tawny skin. Steady as clockwork was the movement until a passing boat of laughing girls or some village bathers would urge them to greater efforts.

"Ha-hai, hantam, hantam!" the bowman would cry, tossing his paddle in the air, and the panting crew would churn the water into foam.

The forty-five miles to Simanggang are full of interest and the journey can be dangerous. When the tide makes near Lingga mouth it meets a volume of water coming down the funnel of the Batang Lupar; it piles in a wave or bore that is forced up the river at a speed of ten or twelve miles an hour. It is a grand sight, the huge rollers that seem to stand up and curl over in a mass of white spume wherever there are shallows. Luckily the roaring of the bore can be heard for an hour before it is sighted, and there are spots where the angry waves die down to a gentle swell. It is wiser, though, not to follow too closely upon the tide, for at bends the bore strikes the projecting bank, to recoil the way it came, and there is nothing so terrifying as to see this black vengeful wave sweep back on a puny boat. Every year the river takes its toll of innocent victims, and all the time eats away the good land it drains.

The banks of the river in its lower reaches are mostly flat and swampy, cleared by the Balau Dyaks for their paddy farms, so that at a distance the emerald crops appear like luscious meadows. Every now and then we pass a Dyak village that is like nothing else in the world--a long low-roofed structure perhaps 600 feet in length standing high above the ground on a forest of posts; its walls and roof the dried brown leaves of the nipa palm. In the bad old times before a White Man had taught peace, Dyaks lived in constant warfare with each other, so for the sake of greater security they gathered together in communal houses where their heads felt safer on their shoulders; and so deep-rooted had the tradition become that the "long house" was part and parcel of their social existence.

As we pass each house, men, women, and children swarm on to the rickety verandahs to shout and wave their hands to the boats with the government flag.

We leave behind the Island of Siduku where the river forks, and as we reach the old site of Pemutus village, thoughts revert to James Brooke, to Captain Harry Keppel, and his men of the "Dido." Here in 1844 Sharif Sahap and Pangiran Makota made their first stand in the cause of piracy against the White Rajah who stood for liberty and justice. Five forts armed with many brass guns had been built there. The British sailors from the "Dido" and the paddle-steamer "Phlegethon" pulled their boats in shore, followed by Brooke's native levies. There was no hesitation; the stockades were taken by storm, the pirates fleeing by the rear, leaving many dead and some sixty-four cannon in the hands of the attacking party.

Keppel writes of this occasion, "Our Sarawak followers, both Malays and Dyaks, behaved with the greatest gallantry, and

dashed in under the fire of the forts. In fact, like their country, anything might be made of them with a good government; and such is their confidence in the judgment of and their attachment to Mr. Brooke, that he might safely defy in his stronghold the attack of any foreign power."

Beyond this historic spot the river winds in many curves for mile after mile, until sweeping round a bend, a long reach brings into sight a green hill standing cliff-like from the water, crowned with a black and white fort flying the Sarawak flag. On this, my first introduction to an outstation, I was rather surprised to see a puff of white smoke shoot away from the fort, followed by the report of a gun, another and another. I sat up, evidently a salute.

Ceremonious functions have always thrilled me, especially if I can take a minor part in them. It struck me that a Resident in Sarawak was a more important personage than I had ever imagined. I pictured Bailey feeling very proud, then I noticed my dirty crumpled khaki clothes and wished I had known this was going to happen, so that I could have prepared myself in a decent white suit. Suddenly the awnings of Bailey's boat were torn apart and he emerged waving his arms like a frenzied semaphore, not at all what one would expect should be done in acknowledgment of a complimentary salute. The firing ceased, and as we came abreast the fort hill, little groups of men like ants, some black, some white, emerged from the building and ran down to the landing stage. Bailey stepped ashore where two white officers waited. He was decidedly irritated, for the first words he spluttered were, "What the etc. etc. etc. are you firing for?"

We then learned that the station was all agog expecting a visit from the Rajah; consequently as our boats came round the corner they were determined not to be caught napping.

Along an avenue of sweet-scented angsona trees into the cool shade of the fort, we had reached Simanggang at last.

CHAPTER V

The original Batang Lupar fort was built in 1849 to command the entrance to the Skrang river, on a low-lying site that was still marked in my time by two or three lonely pinang trees. Fifteen years later it was moved a little way down river to the hill at Simanggang, and named Fort Alice after the Rajah Sir Charles Brooke's sister. Like most of the outstation forts of Sarawak it was built of massive "belian" or ironwood in an oblong enclosing a small courtyard. The exterior was protected against the attack of spear-armed natives by a latticed screen from the eaves, and formidable chevaux de frise. The hill itself was sheer on the river side, but elsewhere its slopes were shady with trees and bright with flowers--cannas, jasmine, Honolulu creepers and the mauvy blue morning glory. The front facing the water was the great Court Room, containing an inadequate table shrouded in green baize from which justice was administered, some wooden safes, also a few small tables ranged along one side for the junior officers and the two or three Chinese clerks. Down the center forming a nave were racks of Snider carbines for the garrison of Rangers or Malay levies. One rack was full of interesting relics--blunderbusses, flintlocks, ancient Tower rifles, a revolving five-chambered rifle and Sir James Brooke's fowling-piece. Sir James' dueling pistols also hung in this room, while on brackets behind the seat of justice were some grotesquely hideous earthenware heads, the gift of a former Resident of credulous mind who fondly imagined Dyaks might collect them instead of human trophies. It was an ambitious idea, and whoever was responsible for exposing these grimacing pieces of pottery in a court of law was certainly not devoid of humor. From the Court Room a door led to the officers' quarters, a living room and two bedrooms. The Assistant Resident had his room at the other end of the Fort in close conjunction with the Rangers' sleeping quarters.

Behind the fort was the jail cheek by jowl with the other quarters for police and military. Beyond stretched some acres of green pasture with cattle browsing, for all the world like a well-kept park in old England. Simanggang was proud of this estate; any day gangs of prisoners could be seen cutting close the coarse "lalang" grass or pulling up by the roots the scrub that once given a free hand would soon have overrun cherished park lands. The whole station was kept in perfect order, the buildings cleanly white, the grass lawns cut close, not a weed allowed to disfigure the paths.

Another source of pride was the cattle derived from Short-horns imported by the Rajah; they decreased in size as time went

on, but the Officers' Mess had a joint of beef every now and then, as well as plenty of fresh milk and butter--an inestimable boon, as anyone will admit who has had to put up with tinned substitutes.

Bailey, who loved to impress upon us that he was a yeoman of Kent, hence a farmer by heredity, was also experimenting with a flock of sheep; they grew very small and skinny, still they provided a welcome taste of mutton as a great treat, on high days and festivals. Our staple diet up country was the ubiquitous chicken. Dyak chickens, about the size of bantams, stringy and tasteless. Chinese cookies, though, are artists at deception. They can transform the bird into anything you like, so that with a little imagination you can pretend you are feasting on veal, pork, or even lamb.

If you mentioned the word "chicken" at Fort Alice you laid yourself open to severe penalties; you could only whisper "fowl" or the Dyak equivalent "manok." I used to anticipate with horror the prospect of going home to be fêted with the inevitable roast chicken. I never did escape it, but odd to say I did not recoil in disgust; a home-fed chicken has no relationship to a Dyak "manok."

The shopping center of Simanggang was the Chinese Bazaar, a row of wooden open-fronted shops extending along the river bank. They all seemed to stock the same goods--tinned salmon, sardines, and brawn, dirty-looking biscuits, jars of weird preserves, rolls of Turkey red and flowered muslin. They all had the same smell, too--a conglomeration of pungent spices, mildew, and mustiness.

The Chinese shopkeeper never put himself out to push his wares. When he was not curled up on a bench smoking, he lounged about in loose trousers and a singlet, his touchang coiled round his bald pate. His children made mud pies on the shop floor; white and yellow mongrels with heads like foxes kept a wary eye for the kick that was never long in coming, while lanky-legged chickens wandered imperturbably everywhere. Small parties of Dyaks, clean-built, upstanding figures of men, bare of body save for the colored "sirat" or breech-cloth, strolled aimlessly from one shop to another. Possibly they had come from far up river bringing bundles of rattans or rolls of jungle gutta to barter for cloth or salt or tobacco.

A jovial soul, Seng Kim was purveyor by appointment to Fort Alice mess. It would be beyond me to say how many bottles of whisky and gin he had supplied during the course of many years, or how many tins of dubious fish had found their way from the shelves of Chop Seng Kim to the mess table; it must have amounted to vats and mountains. Prices in those days sound

fantastic; whisky (good brands) was 90 cents, about half-a-crown, a bottle, and a large square flagon of Hollands cost 75 cents. Even at that price the Assistant Resident Baring-Gould and myself could not always afford whisky, and had to take our sundowner in Schiedam and water, a beastly drinkr

The Malay population of Simanggang lived in two separate villages, the Kampong Ulu above the fort and the Kampong Hilir belowr The Kampong Ulu considered itself the more aristocratic because it was the home of the senior native officer Tuanku Putra. The Tuanku was the son of Sharif Sahap, the prime pirate who had been defeated by Sir James at Pemutus in 1844. He was distinctly of the Arab type, and being a Sharif, claimed lineal descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Tall with spindle legs and a Jewish nose, his nickname with us was "The Camel,r" though his fine character had nothing in common with the animal. His responsible position was an example of the Rajah's policy towards those who had once defied himr Having shown his power and reduced his opponents to impotence, they were gradually given important positions in the Government, and in practically every case, these ex-rebels proved their worth, and became the most reliable and loyal supporters of the Rajah's ruler "En passant" it is rather curious to reflect that, with natives especially, the greatest rascals always make the most faithful servantsr I had a Malay retainer who had served many sentences for swindling and theft who travelled with me everywhere, was a stand-by on expeditionsr and the best body servant I ever had. I never lost anything I put in his charge, though I think he would have robbed his brother if it had been to my advantage. Once I missed a gold stud, hunted in every possible place for it, and then let my wrath fall on the fellow. The stud was found in a shirt I had thrown into the laundry basket. All the "boy" said was, "Tuan need not have been so angry,r" but his pained expression made me feel a worm. Officers were allowed a prisoner to carry water and do menial jobs; experience proved that the most notorious scoundrel or murderer was the best man to have; for some reason or other a Christian native was the worst

Besides Tuanku Putra, there were two other native officers at Simanggang--Abang Haji Chek and his son Haji Taminr Abang Chek was a small wizened Malay from the Saribas, likewise the descendant of piratical ancestors. His face underneath a dirty turban was wrinkled like a walnut, terminating in a white goat's beard. His eyes were sharp and shifty; he walked with a staff in determined struts. He had a great reputatïon for pluck, but it was as well to be wary in following his advice; we used to see parties in an impending law suit going towards his house laden with baskets of rice or crates of fowls. That little failing was his downfall in the endr

Haji Tamin did not count much; he was dominated by his father. It was not until the two senior native officers had passed away that he came out in his true light as a dependable magistrate.

Simanggang being the center of the Dyak country, most of our dealings were naturally with the Dyak population. I do not propose to discuss at length the origin of the so-called Sea-Dyaks; that has been done by more competent authorities. It is sufficient to say that after many years' association with them one cannot fail to remark the basic similarity of their language and physical characteristics to the Malays; pointing indisputably to the same stock. Both Malays and Dyaks are immigrants into Borneo; the former most probably the same race converted to Islam by Arab influence round about the fifteenth century. During the piratical era the Dyaks were closely associated with their brother Malays, and as sea-robbers became known as Sea-Dyaks to differentiate them from the more peaceful, agricultural, Klemantan tribe of Land Dyaks in southern Sarawak.

The Dyak in his jungle retreat is a charming person, both men and women of pleasing appearance, short in stature but well made, full of life, hardworking and independent. Hospitality with them is not so much a custom as a law. The Malay, owing to his contact with Islamic traditions, is reserved and indolent, his womenfolk lurk in the background. Not so the Dyak, he is open in his nature, and the women are very much to the fore. My experience of the so-called "savage" of the jungle is that he is definitely more moral, honest and sober than his fellow who has learned Western ideas. There is not so much that our wonderful civilization can teach them. The Dyak has an adventurous, roving disposition, so that parties of the young men constantly break away seeking what fortune may bring them in other lands. They go to the Malay Peninsula, to Java, to the Celebes, and once in a Dyak house far in the interior I was proudly shown a picture postcard of Brooklyn City Hall sent home by the chieftain's son, who had reached New York as a ship's hand.

What do these young savages learn of our civilization? They come back to their jungle home attired in a smart tweed suit and yellow leather boots. They have learned that money rules the world, that honesty means not being detected in trickery, that poverty and discontent are everywhere. They have many stories to tell the simple up-river folk of the sights they have seen. White Men, the same race as the "Tuan" at Simanggang, reeling drunk on the wharveside, babbling obscenities; painted White Women, similar to the "Mems" in Kuching, walking the streets--prostitutes. Then they have a lot to say of the pictures in the Cinemas. We have built up our influence in the East on the prestige of our race; the Cinema has done more to

destroy it than anything else. I know, because I have seen the gloating leering eyes, I have heard the catcalls and whistles of young natives witnessing a half-dressed White Woman being mauled by a drunken roué, or a close-up of the lingering kiss the films are so fond of. Heaven only knows why the Cinema was not more drastically controlled in the first instance throughout all our Eastern dependencies. Natives consider our waltz an immoral dance; it makes one sick to think of the construction an Asiatic mind must put on the presentation of sexual situations that we in our "civilized" complacency regard with indifference, while the gangster or crook type of film meant only to thrill us, must convey quite another significance to untutored intelligences. Now it is recognized that something ought to be done; the poison has already spread.

The one characteristic of the Dyak that has always claimed attention is the custom of head-hunting. One cannot condone a practice so opposed to our enlightened ideas, but we can at least look at it from the Dyak point of view. The Dyak race consists of numerous clans analogous to those of the Scottish Highlands. The young bloods were of a truculent disposition, quarrels arose and people got killed; thus feuds were started, and retaliation for injuries became a law. Further, what could be more convincing of a man's prowess in fight than the head of his victim? From these beginnings head-hunting became a sort of instinct, an obligation, almost a religion. It was difficult for a young man to marry unless he could present his inamorata with a human trophy. When a relative died, an enemy's head was necessary to allay the mourning and to provide the deceased with an attendant in the World Beyond. On the death of a chief it was incumbent on his warriors to seek heads in order to ensure a suitable retinue for his spirit. The worst feature of the custom was that it was immaterial whether the head was of a man or a woman. Head-hunting as a recreation has disappeared from amongst the tribes that are in touch with the Sarawak government; only in the far interior does it break out very occasionally, to be suppressed by punitive measures. When hands are lifted up in horror at this barbarous practice of head-hunting, we must remember that it is less than a hundred years since Dyaks were brought into contact with civilized ideas, that a century ago we too had laws that may seem barbarous to us now, and that a hundred years hence people will be horrified at the brutality of the Great War.

The 2nd Division, my district, I felt entitled to call it now, comprised four good-sized rivers--the Batang Lupar, Saribas, Kalaka and Sebuyau. It covered six or seven thousand square miles, with a population of about 60,000 Dyaks, as well as a considerable number of Malays and Chinese. Three English Officers controlled the whole of this territory. J. Baring-Gould, a son of the author, was Assistant Resident. He was one

of the best; a good friend, a good all-round sportsman, with a knack for managing natives. I am sure "B.G." never had an enemy in the world.

When I came into the Service there were barely fifty Europeans in Sarawak. The Civil Service was composed of men personally chosen by the Rajah, in many cases connections of those who had been intimately associated with the country. Consequently the State obtained the services of a group of gentlemen peculiarly adapted to the traditions of Sarawak, and universally devoted to the Rajah and his cause. A native has the greatest respect for a white man who is above everything a gentleman, who has sporting instincts, and who can, without undue familiarity, sympathize and associate with him on all and any occasion. In some colonies it is the rule to give administrative posts to brilliant scholars devoid of other qualifications; as a result the native misses the personal touch that alone binds him to our ruler.

My duty as a Cadet was to do everything the Resident and Assistant Resident did not do. I was designated "bottle washer" and that about describes my status.

Here are some extracts from the regulation, "Hints to Young Officers from the Rajah."

An officer to be efficient must have regularity in his habits. He should never give an order for anything to be done except he sees that his order is properly carried into effect. He should devote a certain amount of time to social and friendly intercourse with those he has to govern; and this is necessary in order to obtain some knowledge of the character of the people.

Rangers -- Recruits should go through some kind of drill. To keep themselves clean is something towards making soldiers of them. Besides their watches all men should turn out at seven o'clock every morning and do at least one hour's work in clearing or cutting grass, or in other ways making the grounds tidy.

Arms -- Everything to the smallest item should be in eye of an officer. Arms, number and kind--ammunition--cartridges--shot, shell, caps, wads, rammers, and sponges, priming wires, and horns, vent lists, etc. There should be a regular inspection of all these things once a week, the officer examining for himself and not trusting to the reports of others.

On Cleanliness -- It is a mistaken idea that natives who are Rangers cannot be taught to keep a place clean and

tidy. Morning and afternoon sweeping of every part is necessary. A brushing away of cobwebs and the floor kept clear of oil spots and other dirt.

On Watching -- The men who watch should be kept from sitting down; if they are allowed to do this they become slovenly, will soon lie down, and sleep will be the result.

General Remarks -- Proper deference should always be shown to the chiefs; and in case of difficulty it is as well to ask the advice and opinion of the head men. It satisfies them and strengthens you. You are not obliged in all cases to follow their advice, but the fact of asking is a compliment to them and gives them an interest in what is being done by the Government.

There are certain personal dangers to be avoided by those who have to occupy positions of trust when young. The danger is in allowing any relapse of right principle or sense of duty which an English gentleman is supposed to have instilled into him from childhood. Also the avoidance of becoming overbearing and despotic. The best manner in the long run with natives is to be thoroughly natural and in no way patronising. A mixture of kindness and freedom with severity when required without harshness or bullying. Joking to be limited to the comprehensions of the people. Never put natives on a familiar footing. They hold their position in society and you yours. They are not inferior, but they are different.

I think that ably sums up the main points of the education of a young officer in Sarawak. These requirements were drummed into us from the start, and in them centered the success of the Brooke rule.

The Ranger garrison was in my charge. I took the roll-calls, granted leave, saw the fatigue party working, made a fuss about dirty buttons and long hair; also poked my nose into odd corners searching for the cobwebs and oil spots the Rajah speaks of.

I also looked after the Prisons. In the mornings I saw the prisoner gangs off to work; they did all the road work and kept the cleared grounds in order. The female prisoners--there were rarely more than two or three--occupied their time sewing prison garments.

Prisoners in an out-station had a pretty light time and more food than they could eat, because a pig farmer used to come round daily to collect the leavings of their rice rations.

Natives never considered it any degradation to be confined in a House of Correction, the euphemistic term for an out-station jail, they seemed to glory in it. When long-term prisoners had completed their time, they used to come up to the fort to take farewell of us with a warm handshake, and ever afterwards they would talk with gusto of the period they spent in "government employ." Sometimes an up-river Dyak would find the restraint and daily routine getting irksome and make a break for freedom, but he never got very far; somebody, generally his own relations, invariably brought him back again.

One of my daily tasks was dispensing medicine. In a case alongside my desk were sundry bottles known as "Winchesters" labeled "Stomach Mixture," "Cough Mixture," "Liniment for Sprains" and so on; pots of Boracic Ointment, pots of Goiter Ointment of a beautiful pink hue, and of course quantities of castor oil. Dyaks crowded round, planked down two cents, and when their ailments accorded with the labels on the bottles it was plain sailing. If there was any difficulty in diagnosing a case, I was instructed to prescribe castor oil; as far as I know it generally did the trick. A former Cadet had a brain-wave; he put all the dregs of the mixture bottles into a jar labeled "For the Hoi Polloi." That saved him a lot of trouble. Cough mixture was so popular that the Medical Department limited our supplies; Dyaks used to roll up for a morning's dose, just as we might call in at a Bar for a morning glass of beer.

Another petty job that fell to my lot was selling postage stamps, often licking them onto dirty envelopes. One might consider these duties rather derogatory for a European; all the same they were good training because it brought me into contact with many kinds of natives, and unconsciously one picked up their languages. Even the present Rajah³ as a young officer at Simanggang passed through the same schooling, though, rumor had it, he did not exactly appreciate it.

3. Vyner Brooke, the last Rajah of Sarawak, is referred to herer

CHAPTER VI

Early each morning the Court Room began filling up with a chattering crowd of Dyaks, Malays and Chinese; some concerned with litigation, some paying in their trivial taxes, others merely moved by idle curiosity to see what was going on; they came up to the fort to while away an odd hour or so, as we might call in at a picture palace.

At about ten there was a stir. Police arranged wooden benches before the Court table; Dyaks squatted on the floor chewing betel-nut; then as B.G. and I retired behind the scenes, the Native Officers solemnly took their places. The stage having been set, we followed Bailey into the room with proper dignity, seating ourselves at the green baize table. The Resident's Court was sitting.

Cases were of all kinds, criminal and civil, the latter chiefly concerned with disputes over farming land, or the division of inherited property. The two protagonists occupied the front bench arguing their case in their own language. The Resident did all the cross-examining, writing out a synopsis of the matter as he proceeded, and if either of the parties wandered from the subject, as usually happened, he received a dig in the ribs from the police behind. Witnesses when called also huddled on the front bench; it was all delightfully free and easy with no trappings, barriers or dock.

All Dyaks have the gift of the gab, putting their case forward in the most plausible way, but a few direct questions usually found out the party in the wrong and the Native Officer or Dyak Penghulu knew the affair from A to Z, so as a rule it was plain sailing; there were no lawyers, thank goodness, to complicate the point at issue; judgment was given and the litigants slid off their seat to give way to the next on the list. Sometimes in a communal action things got lively, recriminations followed arguments, partisans squatting on the floor, put in their lurid opinions; the police made more noise enforcing order and it really looked as if a deadly feud was in the making; but it was all part of the game. Many times I have seen Dyaks who had spat at each other in Court having a glass of "arak" together in the bazaar before proceeding up-river in the same boat.

The method of summoning Dyaks to Court was peculiar. Paper documents would have been useless, so a "tongkat," a Malacca cane walking stick with a brass head and a government

mark, was sent abroad from village to village with a verbal message, until it reached the person named, who forthwith hurried to Simanggang. The system was effective and I never heard of a "tongkat" going astray or being abused.

No Court fees were paid by up-country tribes, the Rajah wisely considering that every encouragement should be given for the settlement of disputes by government magistrates rather than by native methods.

Afternoon office work was a repetition of the morning's, though less exciting because there was no performance of the Law Court; in fact we drowsed through the vicious heat until tea time, after which it was cool enough to take some exercise. One of us would ride; there were two government ponies at the station; the other man was detailed to accompany Bailey on his evening constitutional, generally a round of the cowsheds or a tramp to see the prisoners knock off work.

As the sun sank, and the quick deepening twilight of the tropics began to fall, we sat out in the cool on a seat overlooking the river, so close to the edge of the precipitous hill that a false step would have been calamitous. We took our evening "stengahs" here and watched the boats pass on the stream, each one hailed by the sentry in the Fort. When the tide made, we watched the bore dash round the point at the end of the reach. Malay boys waited there in tiny canoes to be caught up on the huge tidal wave and swept along at an extraordinary pace. It was no child's play, for lack of boat control often meant broken bones or even loss of life.

Scarcely an evening passed without a visit from various natives, they sat round on the grass to tell us the news of the Dyak world. Sometimes we would rather have been alone, but it carried out the idea of government by personal contact, and no doubt we learned many things that would not have come to our ears otherwise, especially after the visitors had been treated to a sip from the gin bottle always kept handy for the more distinguished personages.

Every night at eight o'clock a ceremony peculiar to Simanggang took place. A drawbridge extended from the upper floor of the Fort over the chevaux de frise. The Corporal of the guard having seen all the doors locked, pulled up the drawbridge, at the same time yelling the following formula: "Pukul delapan udah bebunyi; tangga udah tarek; pintu udah kunchi; orang enda tau niki agi-i-i." (Eight o'clock has sounded; the bridge is pulled up; the doors are locked; nobody can come up any more.) In theory, we were prisoners until dawn; actually, there was an exit known as the postern door that was available if we wanted to take the night air.

There was no such thing as a gramophone or wireless to enliven our evenings; we usually read books or very aged papers. Bailey had a musical ear and a voice like a bull that he liked to air; unfortunately he had no songs, so "faute de mieux" he would let himself go on hymns. There is something about those old tried hymn tunes that is wholly infectious. A dusty prayer book was dragged out from a bookshelf and soon all three of us would be chorusing the better known melodies. It must have sounded strange issuing from that whitewashed fort in the middle of Borneo. It was not that we were moved by any religious motive, nor were we irreverent; it was a means of breaking the monotony, above all it made us think of Home. The concert always ended with "God Save the Queen"

The arrival of the home mails was a big event. They were sent from Kuching in a Chinese trading "bandong" at intervals of a fortnight or three weeks. As the time came we anxiously scanned each boat coming round the point. At last there was the welcome "chonk-chonk" of sweeps in their rowlocks and a rush to the "pangkalan" to haul the mail bag to the Fort. Our hands trembled as the contents were poured out on the floor in expectation of what might be in store for us. Looking back I am sure the anticipation was more thrilling than the realization. When letters had been read and papers glanced at, there was a vague feeling of disappointment that after all the world had not changed so much; while official communications brought one up with a jerk to the sense that we were still part of an ordered organization, not so independent in our isolated district as we were apt to imagine. I think subconsciously we were rather hurt at what seemed interference with our self-centered lives. I have often thought the happiest time was between the mails when we were wrapped up in the little problems of everyday outstation life, free from extraneous meddling, quite indifferent to the affairs of the outside world.

The daily press that ranks as a necessity of life, is really a curse of civilization. It has the world in its toils. By his pen John Smith or Tom Brown can sway people, pit nation against nation--sensationalism, to send up the circulation of a newspaper. If we want peace John Smith writes of war; if we would like to be gay Tom Brown tells us civilization is crashing. When we meet each other, we do not say, "That old fool Smith is talking of war again," or "That rabid pessimist Brown wants muzzling." No! We pull a long face and mutter, "The papers say it is so." The freedom of the press is a license to mislead. It is also a true saying that ignorance is bliss. If people were not so dependent on the news they read, they would judge life by what they see around them. The psychological effect would be to make a cleaner, brighter world and lightheartedness would mean goodwill between people and nations

It was not often that three officers found themselves together at Simanggangr One or the other was generally "en route" visiting distant posts of the districtr

My first traveling experience was a trip with Baring-Gould to pay a call on the Ulu Ai, the people living in the headwaters of the Batang Luparr These Dyaks had always been particularly troublesomer They had endless feuds with the down-river population, kept alive by the young warriors in a continual vendettar Year after year fresh victims were claimed, to be followed up by government punitive expeditionr For a while the activities of the Ulu Ai would die down to break out spasmodically at the slightest imaginary provocationr In 1897 under their leader Bantin they raided some down-river Dyaks and were attacked in their turn by a government forcer That had kept them quiet for two years so B.G. and I were told to further cement the peace by visiting them in their own homesr

We left at dawn, paddling up river in two long boatsr Above Simanggang the river banks are hilly, the vast paddy swamps of the lower reaches are left behindr Here and there red rocks jut out into the stream; giant "gensurai" trees trail their drooping branches in the water; at every turn wooded hills, crowned with Dyak houses, come into viewr As we passed each long house the boats' crew burst into a yell fetching out scores of men, women and children who ran down to the bank shouting out invitations to stop. "Niki," they cried, "niki ka rumah, Tuanr"

In the afternoon we reached Pangkalan Marup, a settlement of Sambas Chinese who worked gold at Tiang Lajm, a mountain a few miles inlandr For years they mined with considerable profit, for Marup gold had a reputation second to none. When I made their acquaintance the accessible ore was worked out, but they assured me gold was still there, though the tunnel they had driven into the mountainside was too dangerous to continue owing to overhanging rocksr

The Marup Chinese were a little community of their own, they lived aloof, and although law-abiding subjects of the State, they followed their own domestic rules and regulationsr In the course of time they had intermarried with Dyak women with great success and the offspring seemed to retain the best characteristics of both racesr

Above Marup the flood-tide was lost in the ever downward course of the rushing currentr Rocks now showed their heads in midstream; round the sharp projections the water surged; the muddy banks gave place to shingle shoals of large rounded pebbles, and as the river got more shallow the crew abandoned their paddles, punting the boats along with bamboo polesr Every

now and then where the river rushed through a narrow channel, the men jumped overboard and with shouts and yells pulled the boats bodily along until quieter water was reached.

Pushing, punting, boats grating, men sweating, we suddenly saw the fort of Lubok Antu ahead. A trim white blockhouse on an eminence with a row of Chinese shops on the bank.

We stayed here a few days. Lubok Antu (Spirit Bay) takes its name from a black pool recessed in the bank, reported to be of immense depth and the home of the father of crocodiles. The view from the fort was entrancing. In front the pure clear river flowed ever down stream, a gurgling current when the elements were kind, an angry swishing torrent leaping over its pebbly bed when black clouds showed rain in the "ulu." At the back, undulating cattle pasture extended to jungled hills, framed in their turn by the mystic blue mountains of Dutch Borneo.

The air here was quite different to Simanggang; we had been going on an upward grade all the way and there was a freshness that put new life into one.

The fort was garrisoned by a guard of fortmen under the charge of old Police Sergeant Dagang. He was known to us as "Sniff and Jingle" from his habit of sniffing and jingling his official keys to announce a visit to the officer's quarters. After making a report Dagang always expected a drink of gin. His face was reminiscent of a hideous gargoyle covered with green mildew and after gin it almost seemed to assume a phosphorescent light. All the same Dagang was a man in ten thousand. A Banting Dyak who had embraced Mohammedanism, he enlisted as a fortman at Simanggang at 17 years of age. He accompanied the Rajah (then Tuan Muda) on board the sailing gunboat "Venus" at the attack on Muka in 1860. The advance up the Muka river was made at night and the "Venus" ran foul of a thick rattan hawser stretched from bank to bank. Heavy fire was opened on the helpless vessel and things were looking bad, when Dagang leaped overboard, a "parang" between his teeth, and severed the rope. Dagang showed his pluck in numerous expeditions, always proving himself a steady soldier and a gallant leader. The old man died in 1915. He was the type of the old class of government servant one was proud to know and treat as a trusted friend.

Although there was peace with the Ulu Ai, careful watch was always kept at Lubok Antu. So much so, that the village was surrounded by a high palisade with watch towers, no one being allowed to stray outside beyond sight of the sentries. Dyaks can be treacherous.

With our peace tour in view we spent some days going up-river as far as Delok, visiting almost every Dyak house we could reach. Everywhere our reception was most cordial. We sat for hours in the "ruai" or public hall of the houses surrounded by men, women and children, all bombarding us with questions. No one showed a trace of shyness, in fact the girls were somewhat embarrassing in their attentions. Few of them had ever seen a white man before and they were anxious to test the whiteness of our skins by wetting their fingers and rubbing them on our calves to see if it was permanent. Some suggested we should bare our backs to prove we were the same all over but we made excuses. Baring-Gould, being very fair, his golden hair was greatly admired. A quantity of native spirit ("tuak") was brought out, to see how much we could stand and being young and in good conditions we were able to uphold the superiority of the white race most manfully, though it certainly required an effort to drain a bowl of "tuak" that had been delicately stirred by our hostess's dirty finger, followed perhaps by a cold hard-boiled egg that was anything but fresh. However, it was all meant well, and we were on a diplomatic mission.

All these Ulu Ais were a fine upstanding lot with little of the loathsome skin disease so common down-river; there was a good number with goiter due no doubt to the limestone in the water of the district.

Although these Dyaks had opposed the government simply because they were not allowed full liberty to persist in head-hunting, they appeared to have a great reverence for the Rajah; they summed it up by saying, "He understands us Dyaks."

Their faces fell when they learned that Bailey was back at Simanggang. With every good intention of settling the Ulu Ai problem for all time, Bailey had insisted on their building their houses on the river banks so as to be under control. Naturally the Dyaks resented having to leave their ancestral paddy lands and negotiations always came to a deadlock on this point. Insistence only made matters worse; it was mainly for this reason that the very people who were giving us such a good time, broke out again in revolt two years later.

At one house we visited, the women crowded round and a pretty girl was particularly interested in a signet ring B.G. was wearing. At her clamorous request he slipped it off for her to examine more closely. Busily answering questions he forgot about it until it was time to go and then neither the girl nor the ring could be found. Search proved unavailing. We slithered down the slippery causeway to our boats in the dark, B.G. bemoaning the loss of a ring he valued highly, yet afraid to do anything drastic for fear of upsetting the temper of the people. We fed in resentful silence and prepared to

turn in, when we heard a whispered "Tuan! Tuan!" issuing from the dark. There was the young lady squatting on the log that formed the landing stage and what was more there was the ring too. She had business instincts that girl, the ring was not to be returned with a "quid pro quo." Negotiations ensued and B.G. got his ring in return for a cake of yellow Primrose soap, a bag of sugar and a box of matches.

All Dyak women love a bit of soap. In the ordinary way they wash themselves, or rather scrape themselves, with a smooth rounded pebble; soap to them means something more than a cleansing agent; they think it is the secret by which Europeans make themselves white.

It is a curious fact that all dark-skinned races I have ever met wish they had fair complexions, while it is a rage with our bright young things to tan themselves brown.

One moonlight night it was arranged for us to accompany a deer-snaring party. After the evening meal half-a-dozen canoes set out laden with a few prick-eared mongrels and a quantity of "jaring" (rattan nooses). Our destination was a large promontory formed by a curve in the river. We disembarked at the narrowest part for the "jaring" to be fixed. Poles were cut and soon a taut line of nooses each overlapping the other, and hanging four feet high, stretched across the promontory from bank to bank. It was all done without disturbing the silence of the night; we were not even allowed to smoke. The moon became obscured; it was going to rain, they said.

A shelter of leaves and boughs was made for us midway down the snare, and we crouched inside as a slight drizzle began to fall.

Silently a party of Dyak hunters, carrying spears and taking the dogs with them, pushed off in boats for the point; others took their station along the "jaring," squatting in the undergrowth. B.G. and I had brought old Snider rifles, not that we expected to shoot anything, but just for the look of things.

For an interminable time we sat cramped, hardly daring to move; mosquitoes worried us; dead silence was all around, except for the drip, drip of rain drops from every leaf.

The tension was getting unbearable; then a dog gave tongue in the distance; we pricked up our ears; another spoke and soon there was a gay chorus coming nearer. But it died away into stillness. Suddenly there was a rustle in the bushes behind us; we sprang to our feet to catch a momentary glimpse of something flashing past. A Dyak flung his spear; it was nothing to

count, however; only a "plandok" (mouse-deer). Another rustle to quicken our nerves, and a dog emerged, looked at us inquiringly, then disappeared with his nose to the ground.

The awful silence, as well as the mosquitoes, fell on us again. I could stand it no longer; taking up my rifle I went out into the undergrowth beyond the "jaring" where I could at least stretch my cramped limbs. Simultaneously the dogs burst into a babel of noise directly in front of me. I saw what appeared to be a gigantic horse rear into the air straight at my head. Instinctively I fired from the hip and then felt myself hurled to the ground and pinned there. Dyaks came rushing up; I heard the dull thuds of spear heads in flesh. I was dragged up, and a dead "rusa" lay stretched on the ground. It seems a deer had tried to leap the "jaring" but catching his forelegs in the rattan rope had brought it down pinning me under the contraption only a few inches away from the struggling beast.

The Dyaks were quite angry. They told me I was a fool to be on the wrong side of the noose, that I might have been killed, and then they would have been responsible for my death.

Though I bore for days a nasty gash where the rattan had bitten into my thigh, I am glad to say my bullet was found in the beast and we feasted on venison for some time.

CHAPTER VII

Fifty years ago in the out-stations we were not unduly hampered by the inquisitions of Headquarters. Communication was so uncertain that each district was practically independent, ruled by its Resident with the commonsense born of experience. If awkward circumstances arose he had to deal with his native charges. His personal acquaintance with them, their customs and ideas, formed a bond of common sympathy. He was in fact, as the Eastern expression had it, "the Father and Mother" of his people. In these days "Progress" with its telegraphs, telephones, and speedy transit has largely undermined the authority of the man on the spot. Responsibility is shifted to Headquarters, who in their turn, keep many an officer at his desk busy with endless questionnaires and statistics, when he might be better employed getting personally familiar with the characteristics of the natives in his district. The outstation officer is not the Power he was, he is merely an item in the government machine.

Not long after my return from the Ulu Ai I accompanied the Resident on a tour of the other rivers of the 2nd Division. Our first objective was Betong, the main station of the Saribas River. It was a tiring journey. Boating up the Skrang we passed the spot where in 1853 two government officers, Brereton and Lee, with a small body of Malays engaged the war force of the Saribas and Skrang Dyaks under the chief Rentap. The Dyaks were repulsed, but Lee lost his life. The Saribas always claimed to have taken Lee's head, but this has been authoritatively denied. The Saribas say that the trophy was first taken to a Dyak house in the Skrang which inadvertently caught fire and was burned to the ground with much loss of property. The remains were moved and shortly afterwards the inmates of the house where they were lodged were decimated by an outbreak of cholera. After these misfortunes, the Saribas say the trophy was returned to the Rajah, who however never admitted this. During some years in the district I made constant inquiries about the affair but although the old men agreed that the trophy was taken, no one knew what had become of it, and I am certain if such a treasure existed its whereabouts could not have been kept dark.

From the Skrang we turned into the Tisak stream, a back-water of fairy-like beauty. The dark leaf-sodden water flows through a tunnel of verdure. Giant forest trees meet overhead, their branches intertwined. Festooned creepers trail and loop the fretted vault. At times masses of the small "pigeon" orchid

fill every fork and crevice,rflooding the air with scent. The sun can only pierce the latticed roof in checkered radiance, flashing beams on gold and blue kingfishers as they dart from bank to bank. Thereafter the trials of Bornean travel began.

The landing stage was a half-submerged tree trunk, slippery as a greased pole. Then for some way the only path was over "batang," flimsy poles supported on cross sticks a foot or more above a black oozy swamp. A native could trip along in perfect ease, his naked toes grasping the sticks, but a European wearing shoes was seriously handicapped on these slippery, rotten, rolling "batang." I never remember falling into that forbidding morass, yet I remember well the relief I felt on reaching solid ground. A narrow raised path extended for miles through virgin forest until it emerged on to hills green with "lalang" grass. Here and there a scattered hut, and standing alone on the banks of the Saribas River--Fort Lili.

Fort Lili always impressed me as the most sinister of all Sarawak forts, four-square with ports for the three-pounder guns, high walls topped by the customary latticed opening for light and air. Above the main roof was a superstructure with tiny windows like a dove-cot, an attic for the officers' quarters, an inferno when a burning sun beat through the wooden shingle roof. There was reason for a strong fort at Betong, but the Saribas Dyaks were the boldest fighters and the most implacable pirates the Rajah had to deal with in the early days. From the fort windows one could see some twenty miles away the towering head of Sadok. Here, about 1858, the chief Rentap built his stronghold on the summit of the mountain. He linked his fortunes with the Skrang Dyaks, and Sadok became the hotbed of opposition to the Rajah's rule. For some years Rentap and his Skrang friends raided the country round. Twice they were badly repulsed by government forces, but Sadok was a handy refuge, and after a short respite the enemy were out again on the war-path. Rentap managed to repel two more expeditions led by the Tuan Muda, Charles Brooke, but in 1861 he was finally defeated, and his stronghold destroyed. A 12-pounder gun used on this expedition is said to be still intact on the summit of Sadok.*

4. This is not quite accurate. The twelve-pounder cannon Bujang Sadok, cast in Sarawak and used by Charles Brooke on the final Sadok expedition in 1863, is today in the Sarawak Museum. A second cannon. Bujang Timpang Berang (the one-armed bachelor), so called because it lacks one trunion, was the property of Nanang, the Saribas chief who will be referred to shortly. He was an ally of Rentap at the beginning of the campaign, but came over to the government side part way through. The Bujang Timpang Berang was originally captured from the Dutch at Pontianak by Nanang's father,

In those times when piracy flourished, the Saribas Dyaks were the most pugnacious fighters in Borneo. Since civilization has arrived they have become commercialized. They take more care of their dollars than of their weapons. When the Rajah had to organize an expedition, the Saribas were the first to clamor for a part in it. On active service however we found them unreliable, pusillanimous in front of the enemy, with an eye only to loot. Nevertheless, their way of life was more enlightened than other tribes. Their houses were larger and better built; they were the first to supplement their paddy farms with rubber and even pepper gardens. Christianity made greater strides among them than in other parts. There was a Mission station at Betong, but at that time no resident padre. All the same a native catechist conducted regular services to quite good congregations. It gave me a nostalgic wrench of the heart to hear a boat drift past the fort, the occupants singing a hymn "Aram besembah ka Iya," a Dyak version of "O come let us adore Him." In pursuance of their "civilized" ideas it was rarely one met a Saribas Dyak in his native costume. He wore dirty rags of trousers, and a red jacket with a plaque of gold embroidery at the back. The women aped the Malay lady wearing with the universal short petticoat, a long "baju kebaya," a loose coat of flowered muslin. On feast and gala days the women reverted to their own distinctive dress, the patterned short skirt of woven material, and from the waist to the breasts a corselet of brass-sheathed cane, from which depended, if the lady was of any importance, rows of silver dollars, that jingled and jangled at every movement. On her arms she would wear a pile of silver bangles, on her head a silver comb like a tiara, and a strong-scented chimpaka flower saucily lodged in her hair completed the outfit. Many of the Saribas had mastered the Roman alphabet and could write. I often went up to houses where a group of young girls were sitting in the "ruai" instructing each other with pencil and paper. On one occasion a divorce case was brought to me for settlement in which a number of letters that had passed between the parties was put in as evidence. Court work at Betong was always strenuous; the Saribas Dyak was born a contentious litigant. Morning and afternoon the Court would sit, and until late at night people invaded our quarters to bombard us with questions, appeals, and applications. Touring the district was not a holiday jaunt.

The big man in the Saribas was the Orang Kaya Pamancha, otherwise Nanang, but he was familiarly known as Apai Insol (father of Insol). He was hereditary chief, a very old man, short of stature, and a face crisscrossed with wrinkles. He

and it remained on the summit of Sadok for decades. It was eventually dragged down to Betong by a Brooke officer and displayed at Fort Lili, where it may still be seen (1966).

wore the usual red coat and an enormous gold-fringed turban that made him look top-heavy. During all the disturbances in the Saribas the Orang Kaya remained a staunch supporter of the Government, he had led many punitive expeditions and was nominally a Christian. He was also a man of ideas. At his house in the Padeh River he had pepper gardens, and among other ventures he owned a herd of cattler. The old man died in 1901 to be succeeded in the chieftainship by his son Insol who was never as good a man as his father. The Rajah used to bluntly say he was "spoilt by being a Christian."

Leaving Betong, Bailey and I proceeded down-river to Pusa at the mouth of the Rimbas. The river bank here was low-lying and the government bungalow stood in a grove of coconuts. Behind the building was a fair-sized Malay "kampong" of not particularly friendly or interesting people. Two or three nights in this spot was more than sufficient. Mosquitoes were rampant, to get any peace it was necessary to wear three pairs of socks and swathe our legs in sarongs. Clouds of flying ants would appear after the lamps were lit, our food was literally covered with them. It was also most disagreeable to see myriads of loathsome land crabs throwing up mounds of wet mud in the shade of the coconut palms. The only pleasing feature was the sunset over the lake-like expanse of water with perhaps a brown-sailed schooner idly dropping down the stream. It was a relief to step into a boat for the next stage of the tour.

Slipping down the Saribas in the early hours of the morning, a refreshing coolness in the air, a white mist disentangling itself from the feathery tops of sago palms; the river ever widening, and then a gentle dip of the boat, a waft of breeze from ahead and the sea lay before us. Nothing could be more delightful when the sea was calm, but if there happened to be a swell, a narrow fifty-foot boat with six inches free-board did not inspire confidence.

Just outside the mouth of the Saribas is a sandspit called Batang Maru. Near here in 1849 James Brooke with the aid of H.M.S. "Albatross" and "Nemesis" intercepted a large piratical fleet of Malays and Dyaks led by Datu Patinggi of Saribas,⁵ and Linggir, a famous Dyak chief. In the dead of night commenced the most celebrated battle in the annals of Sarawak. The pirates fought boldly, but they could not withstand the fire from "Nemesis" and the Rajah's fleet. For five hours the

5. According to Benedict Sandin, Curator of the Sarawak Museum, the Malay chief at this famous battle was not the Datu Patinggi, but Abang Apong. Sandin is himself a great-grandson of Linggir and the leading authority on Saribas history.

encounter lasted, until disheartened by numerous casualties the enemy fled. Had James Brooke cut off their retreat, as his followers wanted, not a man would have escaped. He let them go, knowing that a sufficiently severe lesson had been administered. I have often landed near the little Maru stream up which the panic-stricken hordes of pirates fled, and walked along the sands to the mouth of the Kalaka River. Kabong, the port, is right at the entrance of the river. The fort stood on a sandy plain sheltered from the sea by a fringe of casuarina trees. It was not the blockhouse type, but more like a bungalow, containing a court room and officers' quarters. Built of massive "belian" timber to Bailey's design, practically all the material and the labor had been voluntarily provided by the local people. The river curved round the fort, and here straggling down to the water's edge were the little brown huts of the Malay kampong. Nowhere in the country were there nicer folk. The men were fishermen, open, friendly, sturdy fellows; the women free and easy, less shy and constrained than is usual among Malays.

Calca (Kalaka) was well known to the Dutch in 1600, and it must have been one of the earliest settlements in Sarawak. It was always said the purest Malay was spoken in Kabong. The people broke away from Brunei domination somewhere in the sixteenth century and apparently came under the power of Johore, for tradition has it that Kalaka paid a yearly tribute to the Sultan of Johore of two jars of "ayer pinang muda" (the juice of young areca nuts)

Going back still further, a somewhat involved story relates how, in centuries past, a Rajah of Kalaka, Sakai Demong, while on a visit to Brunei, abducted the daughter of the Sultan of Johore who was married to a Chief, a proud descendant of Tatai the Murut, founder of Brunei. The Sultan of Johore, furious at the insult, prepared to take revenge when Sakai Demong boldly facing the consequences, went to Johore. Addressing the Sultan he put forward his case "My lord, it is not meet that a daughter of Johore should wed a man of no breeding, a man of the jungle whose forebears were pig-eating Muruts. Behold I am a descendent of Rajahs, and would raise a race of Rajahs born to rule. Have I not saved the honor of your house rather than brought thee to shame?" The Sultan pondered awhile, then he spoke: "Thou hast said, my son. Go in peace. My daughter may mate with a Rajah of Kalaka, she is above the mat of a Murut."

Kabong was a delightful place to stay at. There were few Dyaks there to pester one with litigation, the Malays did all they could to be friendly and hospitable. Fresh fish or prawns were always to be had, and a herd of government-owned cattle provided milk and butter.

It was possible to walk for miles on sands that would have made the fortune of an English watering-place. Green pigeon

flighting among the bushes on the coast, offered sport for the gun, and in the late evening when the tide was coming in I have stalked curlew until I was dead weary.

I have always found it strangely uplifting to be alone on a tropic seashore. Away to the horizon an infinite extent of ocean, ever changing color, always moving, always thrilling. Maybe it symbolizes a connecting thread with other lands far off. One may walk along the coast of Borneo, and share with those "at home" a like sea and sand, and the same haunting call of familiar sea fowls.

CHAPTER VIII

Kabong was essentially a fishing village. From April to the end of September when the south-west monsoon was blowing and the sea calm, the male population were out all day at their fish traps, "jungkat" and "pengereh."

"Jungkat" fishing was peculiar to the Kalaka. By March long straight poles were cut from "ru" (casuarina trees) and shipped out to a spot a mile or two from the river mouth where a sand bank made shallow water. A < shaped staging was erected thirty feet above low tide. At the apex a hut of palm leaf was built with a narrow gangway running along both sides to the end of the stakes. The fishermen took me with them to watch their work. We started out in the morning in a "jungkat" boat when the tide was low. The crew of twenty wielded enormous square paddles in the long sweeping stroke known as "be kayoh jungkat."

Kabong is noted for its boatmen; the size of the paddles, the long slow stroke that they seem to be able to keep up indefinitely drive the boat forward swiftly and surely.

Arrived at the staging we clambered up a rickety ladder into the hut and through the loose slatted floor could see the ruffled water far below. The structure swayed in a light breeze; what it was like in a strong wind I cannot imagine.

For a while there was nothing doing. Some of the men mended holes in the nets, the rest lay about, smoked and chatted. The sun was getting oppressively hot. At last the tide turned and there were signs of activity. An enormous net was unfurled and gradually lowered from the side gangways.

An old white-haired fisherman, his arms outspread in supplication, invoked the aid of Allah, then took his stand at the end of the staging, his eyes intently fixed on the water. We returned to the hut and our cigarettes. There are little niceties to be observed; it is not wise to speak of big hauls or good luck; never mention a fish by name, they might hear you and sheer off; never throw a cigarette end or anything else into the water; it is better to talk in hushed tones.

All of a sudden the look-out gave a call; his keen eyes had spotted a shoal of fish in the depths. Instantly the whole party rushed along the gangways, grasped the rattans that held the net and began to haul simultaneously.

It was hard work; slowly and evenly the net came up and as it neared the surface silvery fish began to break water, jumping in lightning flashes. Relentlessly the net emerged so that we could see in the sagging center a pile of shining fish. They were scooped up in long shafted nets, the good fish thrown into tubs; the riff-raff went back to their native element.

So it went on, sometimes a large haul, sometimes much less; until the deep water indicated that fishing was over for the day.

As the sun declined we paddled home carrying six tubs brim full of the day's catch. The good fishermen smiled on me--I had brought them luck.

"Pengereh" fishing is much the same principle, but on a far smaller scale than the "jungkat"; the stakes also are planted close in-shore.

Most of the fish was pickled in jars by the women, and when the north-east monsoon broke, putting an end to the fishing, these jars of "ikan aur" were traded round the neighboring country.

Kabong Malays were quite well off; they deserved it; they certainly worked hard for it.

Once or twice during the year when the tides are exceptionally high, an abnormal number of "senaga" appear in the sand; these shellfish are long finger-shaped mussels. As soon as their arrival is known, it is the signal for a general picnic.

All the inhabitants, young and old, repair to the sea shore with baskets of provisions, tambourines and concertinas. Everyone wades into the water groping with their hands in muddy patches for the shell-fish.

It requires some experience to apply the exact strength to extract the mussel with the fingers, for if you are not careful the thin shell breaks and ten to one you cut your hand. Needless to say my fingers were soon raw and bleeding.

Nevertheless it is a joyous outing. Jokes and badinage fly from mouth to mouth; children run about splashing each other; the younger lot do some surreptitious flirting--it is a great opportunity to hold hands unseen beneath the water and whisper words when bent heads meet. Then baskets are opened and the company sit around to eat their rice and cakes; shouts are raised for Alip, or some other expert, and a sporty youth, self-conscious in a tweed coat and yellow tie, bangs an old Malayan love song from a wheezy concertina.

The concertina has been adopted by Malays as their musical instrument "par excellence"; it adapts itself to the wailing tunes they love. Every evening if you are near a Malay kampong you will hear its drawn-out notes accompanied by the more barbaric hand drum. Dyaks prefer the more noisy, but more thrilling music of gongs.

Three hours paddle above Kabong is the second big town of the Kalaka--Saratok. This place has not much charm. It reeks of sago, and the Dyak element is very obtrusive.

I once heard a lady explain that the globules of the mess known as sago pudding were the seeds of the sago plant. Perhaps it is not generally realized that sago is manufactured from the pith of the palm.

After the tree is felled, the bark is stripped and the pith broken into fibrous particles by means of a cumbersome grater, a plank studded with nails. The powdery stuff is then heaped on a sieve-like mat constituting the floor of the thatched hut built on piles over the water, just like a riparian summer-house.

The operator, with a bucket suspended from a long pole, souses the mass of pith with a copious supply of water and then dances on it. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the spectacle of maybe a hundred of their aimless dancers each jogging round and round his summer-house. The process forces the finer powder through the mat into a trough below, along which it is washed to a reservoir on the bank.

The sago undergoes much more washing and refining at factories before it is exported to Europe where a small proportion goes into the puddings so much loathed by most children, and the rest becomes the common starch of commerce.

At Saratok the officers' residence was a bungalow so hot that one sweated profusely sitting still or lying in bed. It harbored in the rafters a "choktau," a lizard like a young crocodile. When the lamps were lit, it called out "chok-tau, chok-tau" at regular intervals until it nearly drove one mad, but nobody dared to dislodge the brute; it was the "antu" or familiar spirit of the building, so it had to be put up with.

Talking of lamps, although in Sarawak, almost on the equator, dark follows day at nearly the same hour, year in, year out, it does vary about half an hour or so. All the same the lamps were always lit at a fixed time. I asked my "boy" why he lit up when it was still daylight; he looked at me astounded that I should ask such a question. "But, Tuan," he said, "it has struck six o'clock."

There was plenty of gaiety at Saratoko. The Dyaks of the district made a festival of an officer's visit. They came down in parties; all the Bazaar accommodation was packed; boat loads of holiday-makers crowded the front.

The Kalaka Dyak liked an occasional flutter at "Fan Fan" or "Chap Ji Kee" at the gambling farm; it never did them any harm and they got a little mild excitement.

The "farms" were monopolies granted to certain responsible persons in each bazaar to sell alcoholic liquors or to have gaming tables. The system worked well because it was under orderly control. I suppose nowadays interfering busybodies would consider it immoral to recognize any form of gambling; though why betting on a racehorse or football team, or even on the Stock Exchange, should be winked at, and staking on a card be a heinous crime, I am not clever enough to understand. Surely it is better to acknowledge and control the frailties of human nature, rather than drive them to fester in dark corners.

It was not altogether holiday spirit that brought the Dyaks down; they had to find something for the "prentah" (government) to do. Litigation is the salt of life to a Dyak; therefore lawsuits were worked up, some genuine, many just trumped up to see if there was any profit in it. Court was held morning, noon and night on the bungalow verandah, a far from ideal Court of Law, for the sun shone in unmercifully; rain flooded us out, and the children of the town thought it their privilege to play hide-and-seek among the posts below.

Among the cases brought up there were certain to be some affecting the inheritance of a "tajau," an old jar. These jars are a peculiar fancy of the Sea Dyak. To look at, they are nothing remarkable. Brown glazed "Ali Baba" jars, some with a dragon ornamentation (benaga), some with a scroll (ningka). Where they came from originally is a mystery, probably from China or Siam. They are obviously antique and the Dyak prizes them as we do a rare old painting, paying as much as \$600 or \$700 for a good specimen. Chiefs and wealthy Dyaks have rows of this pottery in the family room. Chinese manufacture new jars faked to look old and they are hawked round the country by Malays who swindle any innocent they can; but, as a rule, the Dyak is a connoisseur and only buys a new "tajau" to make his dwelling-room look attractive. Some of these fakes, though, are so cleverly made that experts are completely baffled.

The inheritance of old jars is often a difficult problem to solve, so much so that it was not unusual for the Court to sequester the property in order to prevent a deadly feud arising between the contending parties.

Hoarding money was very rare among Dyaks. When they had collected some dollars they preferred to invest in an old jar or else they converted them into silver ornaments for the women. There were Chinese silversmiths in every bazaar, excellent craftsmen as a rule. The procedure was simple; so many silver dollars were melted down to fashion a belt or bracelet and an equal number of dollars was paid for the workmanship.

One Dyak in the Skrang, I remember, elected to keep his dollars, but periodically he laid them all out on the verandah to dry in the sun for fear they might get moldy or moth-eaten. He was always referred to as "The Miser." It was a great blow to the Dyak population when silver dollars became scarce during the War and paper notes were substituted. Many a time I was asked how it was possible to preserve bits of paper. Incidentally I fancy many Dyaks were swindled by the smarter Chinese and Malays who palmed off on them notes of a lower denomination than they were entitled to.

Among the simple minded people paper money will never convey the same confidence as coin and the government credit suffers accordingly. We hold our position in the East through the trust of the native in the integrity of the white man by juggling with currency their faith is badly shaken.

I am inclined to think that Europe suffers from a similar lack of confidence. Subconsciously we imagine a paper pound has not the solid value of a golden sovereign. There may be more in this psychological effect on a nation than financial experts will ever admit.

Saratok was the limit of the routine district tour; from there we retraced our way down the Kalaka, up the Saribas and so back to Simanggang; a month of varied scenes, interesting people and never a dull moment.

Before I had been twelve months at the station both Bailey and B.G. had to go away visiting and I was left in charge. It was a proud moment for a cadet, tempered in my case by the knowledge that I was by no means proficient in the language. I was told to carry on with the Court work. So in the course of duty I took my seat at the magistrate's table. A case was called. The disputants did all the talking, I merely listened. I caught a word here and there and made a note of it; it did not help me much; what it was all about I had not the slightest idea. When the parties had talked themselves out I was expected to give judgment. But here I stuck; I had no notion what to do. Then I had a brain wave. I turned to Tuanku Putra to ask his opinion. He gave it, though I was none the wiser. However I nodded my head in complete agreement and told him to inform the Court what "we" had decided. The scheme panned out beautifully and I settled all the cases, scarcely opening my mouth.

Tuanku Putra of course had realized the position but he put everything right for me in such a courteous way that my dignity as presiding magistrate was unimpaired.

That was not the end of my troubles. For the life of me I could not write up the cases in the Court Book.

In the evening the old Police Sergeant Bakir came to report, so I took him aside, gave him a drink of whisky and begged him to tell me exactly what had happened. We sat down, and there and then in very elementary Malay he went through every case, relating what every witness had said, and I wrote down laboriously what I hoped was a true and faithful account of the proceedings. On the Resident's return I got full marks for my magisterial work.

Bakir was always a wonderful standby. A Balau Dyak turned Malay, he had served the Government for ages. His knowledge of everyone in the district was phenomenal and his advice in any matter was always reliable. Although he became a Mohammedan in order to marry a Malay woman he had two sides to his nature. He could behave with absolute decorum in Malay company and he could also associate with Dyaks as a Dyak. I have seen him after a service at the Mosque sedately sipping gingerbeer with the Malay officials and then met him at a Dyak feast, joining in the incantations and getting so joyous with liquor that he had to be sat upon.

He had served under so many European officers that their individual peculiarities never surprised him; on the top of that, he never lost his respect for the white man.

I cannot think what would have happened to the cadet at Simanggang without Bakir's fatherly assistance.

As fate would have it, my first attempt at being in charge nearly ended in a disaster.

At midnight I was woken up and told the bazaar was on fire. Sure enough there was a nasty ruddy glare in the sky; a terrible hubbub and gongs beating the alarm. I ran down with the Rangers to find a lean-to behind a shop in full blast. It did not take long to pull it down and as there was no wind it died out; otherwise a few sparks on the wooden roofs might have started a conflagration we could never have coped with.

Many outstation bazaars got burned out from time to time; the marvel was that these wooden shanties, lit by naked oil lamps, ever stood for any while.

One of the cadet's duties at Simanggang I always regarded as an imposition, was to turn out every Sunday morning

to inspect and watch the Rangers drill. For this ceremony one had to appear in a clean white uniform with polished buttons. After the dismiss, the jailst, the military quarters, the guns and the Fort had to be minutely inspected; the performance ending in the officers kitchen where one saw the Sunday dinner in preparation.

That having been accomplished the Resident usually made a point of paying an official visit to the bazaar Bailey went ahead carrying a long staff like a drum-major, B.G. and I followed, while the Corporal of the Guard, and a policeman, brought up the rear. We perambulated the whole length of the bazaar, the Chinese shopkeepers standing in their doorways to salute the procession. Every now and then Bailey stopped to ask, "How is trade now?" or, "What is the price of gutta?" If any dirt was found on the pathway or in the ditches the unfortunate shopkeeper had to sweep it up before the Resident's eyes. By the time we got back again to the Fort half the Day of Rest was over.

It was during the Rangers' parade on Sunday, February 10th, 1901, that the Kuching mail arrived and Bailey came to a window whispering hoarsely, "The Queen is dead." It was so sudden; we had not heard of any illness; it left us stunned. I told the Drill Sergeant to dismiss the parade, but he thought something should be done. Addressing the squad he called out, "Hearken! Rajah Queen has gone to the Shades--Shoulder--arms! Present--arms!"

It was the spontaneous tribute of a native to a Ruler whose name and fame shone into every corner of the earth.

It somehow brought a lump into my throat.

We half-masted the flag and that was all we could do to show our respect for the great old lady, but our heavy hearts held her memory.

CHAPTER IX

Every year Sarawak holds a Race Week in Kuching; it is an opportunity for officers to meet each other and every out-station man who can be spared finds his way to the metropolis where the Kuching residents do all they can to give the visitors from the jungle a good time.

Today Sarawak has an organized Turf Club; in 1900 the races were not so formal and for that reason probably more enjoyable. The Rajah's love of horses was the mainspring of every Meeting and his enthusiasm was reflected in his officers.

To start with, Sarawak contented itself with native ponies imported from North Borneo. They were little rats of things ranging from 12 to 13 hands, mostly entire, and ready to eat you as soon as look at you.

The first races were held in 1890, owners riding their own ponies, the Rajah himself taking part. Among the ponies that made a name was Mr. Bampfylde's "William White," a grey that ran seventeen races between 1890 and 1895, winning eight and placing second nine times. He died in 1900 after being hacked at Sibu.

Another famous pony was "Fan Fan," subsequently bought by Messrs. Deshon and Harvey, who re-named him "Polo." Between the years 1894 and 1900 his record was first in eighteen races, second in two, third in four.

My first Race Meeting in Sarawak was in 1900, and I saw "Polo" win all the five races he was entered for. He was a brown horse just over twelve hands. Mr. Lewis, a tall man with long legs, used to ride him with his feet almost touching the ground. Top weight was about 10-7 and at that weight "Polo" could easily take on any other pony in the country. No times were taken of the races then, so it is impossible to compare the running with later-day ponies. The betting was confined to selling lotteries.

As the years passed ideas expanded and soon the horsey men were subscribing for griffins limited to fourteen hands imported from Australia. It gave the racing an extra fillip, but the additional expense demanded bigger stakes and the sporting little Meetings became more formal. The two days races were public holidays and all Kuching made its way to the course at Padungan. It was a motley crowd; the populace swarmed out on

foot; those who were able procured rickshas; Kuching officials used their traps.

On one occasion I remember a party of outstation men who obtained a bullock-cart complete with gaudy awning and colored ribbons, furnished themselves with a copious supply of bottled beer and a coach horn and thus hilariously plodded along to the course.

There was a grandstand for the Europeans and principal natives, a tea-room for the ladies and, of course, a bar for the men.

Opposite the grandstand a long line of native huts built on high posts extended along the rails. These were for the Malay ladies who sat there brilliantly garbed in all the colors of the rainbow; the huts, too, were draped with cloths and sarongs of every hue, making a decorative scheme absolutely unique. Men of nearly every Asiatic nationality crowded the rails all gay and carefree--out for a holiday.

The Europeans were expected to do something. The more senior were judges; those who knew the difference between the head and tail of a horse were appointed starters; those who were not so learned had jobs as Grandstand Stewards, Paddock Stewards, and so forth.

Being a cadet my duty was to put up the winning numbers on the board. It was not onerous and out of all this army of officials I daresay not more than three or four did anything at all.

By traditional right the Resident of Kuching was always Clerk of the Course; he was provided with a bugler who blew a call when ponies had to be saddled and so on.

As the time approached for the first race the Rajah would drive up in a pair-horse drag and take his seat in the stand, to the strains of the Sarawak Anthem. Formality having thus been observed, the Meeting proceeded until evening came and the chattering hordes of natives pushed their way back to their homes, and the band of Europeans, somewhat limp from heat and excitement, made a bee-line for the Club to fortify themselves for the inevitable forthcoming dinner or dance.

It was customary during Race Week to hold a series of sporting events; results were generally far below standard; not surprising, perhaps, considering that no one ever had a decent night's rest.

I remember one worn out up-country officer who won the tennis tournament with the aid of repeated doses of brandy and

ginger-ale; he admitted afterwards he was never quite sure which ball he was hitting.

The Rajah used to fill up the Astana with outstation men. The building had few bedrooms, so some of us were billeted in annexes that were anything but what one would expect in a royal palace. White ants and dry rot were evident everywhere and the furniture deplorable. However, nobody minded; all we required was a mattress to sleep out the few hours that the social round allowed us.

We only met the Rajah at lunch and dinner, the rest of the day was mapped out for him in an inviolable routine. We used to hear him marching up and down his verandah before dawn as he gulped down a cup of boiling coffee prior to his ride. By six he was across river in the saddle. Twice a week in the early morning he would walk to the parade ground at the Fort and watch the Rangers drill, proceeding afterwards to the Orderly Room where he personally dealt with any military offenses. At ten o'clock he was across river again sitting in his office at everyone's beck and call, or ready to hear some appeal case in the great Court.

The Court was a large, bare, whitewashed room with a series of open doors on each side through which the public could wander in and out as they pleased. At one end was a raised dais on which stood a table and a row of leather-backed chairs stamped with the Brooke arms. Wooden benches covered the floor space and the only decorative object in the room was a bronze bust of James Brooke above the Rajah's chair.

That simple court room, open to the world, was symbolical of the patriarchal rule of the Brookes.

During Race Week the Rajah often had two or three ladies over from Singapore as his guests. An extra lady made a lot of difference in our small community where the proportion of males to females was about ten to one, but the greatest excitement prevailed when a young girl was amongst the guests. Competition was so strenuous to be with the young lady, take her out, or dance with her, that the most ardent spirits drew lots to decide who should have first privilege. On one occasion a young man was "told off" by a court of his brother officers for making the running too strong. It was thought he was not playing the game. Now I consider it was an unwarrantable interference; the consequences may have been more tragic than was ever bargained for.

The Rajah was not in favor of his officers marrying. He used to say that the effectiveness of a man deteriorated fifty per cent on his marriage. I think he was right in those days.

when life in an up-country station meant real isolation. To keep in touch with his district an officer had to travel in a primitive way; very few white women could have stood the hardships, nor on the other hand could they have been left alone for long periods with no one but natives around them. Nowadays, perhaps, things are different; all stations are in touch with each other by telephone or wireless, and transport is by motor launches. Nevertheless domestic cares must still interfere a good deal with an officer's activities. A man may marry without let or hindrance in these days, and his appointment to a desirable station may sometimes come about because it is more suitable for a lady's residence. Such considerations never carried weight with the old Rajah; a man was sent where he was thought to be most fitted, and if he had a wife she accompanied him, so to say, as part of his personal luggage.

After the Kuching races in 1900 I obtained three weeks' leave and accompanied Bailey along the coast to Mukah to which station, much to his disgust, he had been temporarily appointed. Mukah was the center of the sago trade and the whole place exhaled sago; even silver ornaments blackened in the fetid atmosphere.

The Melanau people who inhabit the coast district are of Indonesian origin; the majority are Mohammedans, but they retain to a much greater degree than Malays the superstitions and practices of paganism. The women are notoriously good looking, very fair skinned, no more swarthy than Italians; but, curiously enough, the menfolk are decidedly inferior to Malays or Dyaks not only in physique but in facial features.

A peculiar custom among the Melanau is to flatten the heads of female infants. A simple apparatus consisting of a frontal pad and straps is applied to the child's head after it is about a month old, and twisted to a certain pressure. The process never lasts more than ten or fifteen minutes and is continued at intervals on some ten to twenty occasions. The result is a flattening of the brow and occiput and the object appears to be the desire to broaden the face to a moon-like shape of beauty. With their fringe of black hair the deformation is rarely noticeable and the women are certainly prepossessing.

Melanau have never been considered as warriors; they are essentially sago workers, thrifty yet well-to-do; all the same they did put up a scrap at Mukah in 1860 when instigated to resist the Rajah by Sherip Masahor, the renegade who murdered the two officers Fox and Steele.

The Sarawak gunboat "Venus" with the Tuan Muda (afterwards Rajah Charles Brooke) on board was fired on while in a precarious position entangled in a boom defense, but once free the

batteries on shore were silenced and after some diplomatic complications in which the then Governor of Labuan played a rather discreditable part, Mukah was annexed to Sarawak by arrangement with the Sultan of Brunei.

One of the sights of Mukah is the old town in the Tillian stream. At low water it is a black ditch with muddy banks, but the houses on each side are as thick as peas, jostling each other in every size and shape. One sees women filling their water pots with the poisonous looking fluid and babies sprawling everywhere in the mud, thriving on the sago stench.

The real old Melanau houses are few and far between. Those I saw were imposing structures of belian timber standing fifty feet above ground on massive ironwood posts. I was told the object of these aerial abodes was to prevent anyone with a grudge from killing the inmates while they slept, by spear thrusts through the slatted floor.

Bailey was in the throes of a disagreement with the local authorities. Mukah had no adequate water supply and the only suitable spot for a reservoir was the corner of the cemetery site. Bailey wanted the well; the locals said they could manage as their ancestors had with sago-tainted water, but they must have room for their dead. The argument got so heated that it was referred to higher authorities for settlement and Bailey got, what he was really working for, a recall to his beloved station Simanggang.

From Mukah it is only about twenty miles along the sands to the next station, Oya. Here the Resident had a charming little bungalow set in a bright garden on the banks of the river, apart from the smells of the bazaar and the noise of the kampong.

After a few days I was taken up-river to Dalat, another sago-producing town. On the way a curious sight was presented by the number of rafts of "terentang" wood moored to the banks. They are left for about three months in salt or brackish water, during which time the timber is invaded by the "temilok" or "kapang" maggot. When these grubs are fairly established the rafts are floated up-river into fresh water where the maggots attain a great size, sometimes reaching a foot in length. They are then ready for consumption and the Melanau greatly enjoys these succulent worms.

The next stage of my trip was to Sibu on the Rejang, the second largest town in the country. The journey was by boat through the "Cut," a canal that connected the Oya and Igan rivers. Canal is a grandiose word to use; it was in fact a ditch just big enough to hold a canoe. It took us all day to push and shove our boat through the cutting; it was a hot and

weary party that hailed clear water under our keel as we paddled up the mighty expanse of the Igan. We passed the night tied up to the bank and continued on to Sibu in the morning.

The Rajah Muda^a very kindly took me in. I think he revelled in the more or less free atmosphere of Sibu after being "bottle washer" at Simanggang; whatever the cause, the Rajah Muda never had the same fondness for the 2nd Division that his father had.

Sibu boasted of the usual fort, but the staff, more numerous here than in any outstation^a lived for the most part in individual bungalows.

Everybody rode, and the roads were specially maintained for riding, mostly close mown grass, like miniature race courses.

The Club had a tennis-court and a golf course laid out in a grove of cotton trees. A round of golf was full of thrills, it depended on how often you hit a tree, and then whether the ball would ricochet to right or left, or merely fly back to the spot whence it started.

Sibu is an island overlooking a wonderful expanse of water formed by the juncture of the Rejang and the Igan. In the north-east monsoon when the tides are full the island gets flooded; this entails the paths being raised with forbidding ditches. No one was in Sibu long before obtaining an impromptu bath of muddy water when returning from the Club in the evening^a

The Rejang, the biggest river in Sarawak, had diverse tribes living on its banks. Along the lower reaches Sea Dyaks predominated; in the upper waters were colonies of Kayans, and bands of nomad hunters such as Punans, split up again into groups of Ukits and Lisums. All these last mentioned people are the real wild men of Borneo, wandering from place to place in the thickness of the jungle, erecting flimsy shelters of palm leaves on sticks, and living entirely on wild produce, vegetable and animal. The Punan never seeks a quarrel or takes a head for the sake of self-glorification, but he will defend himself or avenge an injury with poisoned darts from a blow pipe, a weapon in the use of which he is an adept. His confiding nature was often taken advantage of by roving bands of Dyaks and this generally led to retaliation.

An example of this occurred about the time I was at Sibua

A party of Dyaks in search of gutta met some Lisums out on the same object. In accordance with jungle law as soon as

the Lisums found a tree they marked it for their own. Whenever this happened the Dyaks cut it down and took the guttar. A quarrel naturally resulted, ending in the death of two Dyaks, while several Lisums got wounded. After the fracas the Lisums conferred with the Kayan chiefs in the neighborhood who advised them to take the long journey to the nearest station and put their case into the hands of the Government. Accompanied by two Kayan boats the party started down river, only to be met by a dozen Dyak boats in full war paint. The Kayans tried to negotiate but the Dyaks stated they were out for the Lisums' blood and if the Kayans interfered it would be at their peril. In the dead of night the Kayans gave the tip to their friends and secretly they scattered into the jungle leaving their personal goods in the hands of the Dyaks.

In a wide tract of unknown country, miles from anywhere, such incidents were not rare, and it meant that a Sarawak official had to be on the alert to exercise considerable tact in order to keep the peace and prevent a general blow-up between big communities like Dyaks and Kayans.

* * * * *

I worked my way back to Simanggang by boat, taking easy stages, and learned that the Rajah was expected.

In the course of a day or two we saw his boat come round the bend, the crew paddling and yelling for all they were worth, the Rajah's own swallow-tailed flag flying at the stern. As junior officer I was detailed to supervise the salute--twenty-one guns from the fort battery of muzzle-loading three pounders. It was a hectic time.

Those old cannon were possessed of devils. They jibbed, they spat, they misfired, they recoiled on to their sides. The gunners got rattled and tried to blow themselves up. The fort was filled with black smoke and blacker language. Then when it was all over the Rangers snatched up their rifles and tore down to the landing stage to form a guard of honor, everybody hot, wet and worried, just in time to receive the Rajah as he stepped ashore.

"Ah! How many guns did you fire, Ward?"

"Twenty-one, Rajah."

"Well, I only counted twenty; are you sure you are right?" And the old man's eyes twinkled wickedly.

The Rajah stayed in his own bungalow behind the Fort, glorified by the name of "Astana." It was a ramshackle dwelling, the

sitting room had a round table and a few bentwood chairs; the bedrooms had dilapidated bedsteads and rickety washstands that would have disgraced a servant's attic; but the Rajah loved it all and would have nothing altered.

There was an old moth-eaten cloth that barely covered the table; it was so disreputable that we got a new one. The first thing the Rajah noticed was this improvement. Without a word he snatched it up and flung it out of the window. We had to rescue the old perforated abomination from the dust-heap and reinstate it.

Every morning the Rajah came over to the Fort and sat in the Court Room to hear personal petitions from a crowd of Dyaks assembled from all over the district. There they sat, squatting on their haunches, their jaws working on a quid of betel-nut; their eyes concentrated on the little person of the great White Rajah. The chiefs picked their way through the mass to touch his hand, beaming with delight when he addressed a few words to them. He never forgot a face and knew everybody's family history.

The Rajah used to hear many cases himself. One of them brought up at this time excited a lot of interest.

An old Malay named Sindut had loyally served the Government for years; he was a leader on many expeditions and an authority on all Dyak affairs. During the time of the troubles with the Ulu Ai he had held the fort at Lubok Antu with credit and courage. When peace came he got mixed up with two other Malays who proposed selling some faked jars to the up-river people. Their procedure was to take the jar to a Dyak house and crack up all its good points. They did not actually say it was an old jar, but they implied it was and the price they asked was out of all proportion to its real value. A Malay jar trader considered it a perfectly legitimate form of business.

At length they persuaded a fool Dyak to take the jar. He paid up only to find out from experts that his purchase was not all he had hoped it was. He demanded his money back and then Sindut came forward and exercising his authority as Native Officer informed the dupe that the deal was clinched and he could not go back on it. Sindut and his colleagues never anticipated that the matter would go further; but it did and Sindut found himself in Court. I doubt if the old man ever realized that he had done anything wrong and when the Rajah with set face sentenced him to two years imprisonment it must have been a stunning blow. But he never even flinched, drawing himself up as if on parade, he saluted his Ruler. "Mana kata Rajah." "It is as the Rajah wills," he said and briskly moved away.

We thought the sentence pretty stiff, but when we came out of Court I saw there were tears in the Rajah's eyes and, as he sank dejectedly into a chair, he murmured: "I had to do it, these people must know I stand for justice."

I heard afterwards that Sindut served his sentence as a warder in Kuching jail, but he never returned to his home at Simanggang.

The Rajah was never so happy as when he was visiting Simanggang. He first came to the district in 1853, and the six years he was in charge of it were full of the adventurous happenings that were the main joy of his life. Leading expeditions to suppress piracy, laying the foundations of law and order, holding his supremacy by what Sir James Brooke called the iron hand in a velvet glove, Charles Brooke learned in his early years in the Batang Lupar how to rule men. He knew every corner of the country, he understood the people. On his periodical visits he sat hour after hour on his verandah with ever changing groups of natives squatting round him, listening with infinite patience to all their tales.

He would have us to dine, and I can see him now, sitting very erect, wearing a curiously striped linen jacket, specially reserved for these occasions, a far-away look in his eyes, talking always of the past recalled by some face he had seen that day.

When the time came for him to leave, he would stand still for a minute or two on the way to his boat, drinking in a final impression of the scene. I know he was thinking of his age and the chances of revisiting his old station. His final injunctions as the boat pushed off were invariably, "Keep everything as it is in the dear old place."

CHAPTER X

On May 18th, 1901, an eclipse of the sun was foretold that would reach absolute totality in our region. Bailey was nervous as to what effect it might have on the natives' minds. In the end, he decided to send B.&. to await events in the Saribas, and I was to stand by at Sebuyau, the other end of the Division. My station was a Malay fishing village, snugly retired up the river in a grove of coconut and sago palms.

The Chinese traders, of course, knew all about the coming eclipse; they spread long yarns about the pitch darkness that would cover the earth, arousing a good deal of trepidation, particularly among the women. Some thoughtful souls had laid in extra supplies of paraffin oil to last out the visitation.

I did my best to allay fears, but I could see that the people put more faith in the Chinese chatter than in my attempts to make light of the event.

On the day, the sun was brilliant at noon, and then blackness began to creep over its face. The Chinese shopkeepers started a hideous din with gongs and cymbals to frighten away the dragon that was eating the sun.

The villagers drove in their chickens to roost; the dogs slunk to their sleeping places.

Even my Malay crew, men of the world, retired to the houses, where the doors and windows were barred.

I was left the only mortal out in the open. The shadow crept on--the gongs were doing no good at all.

In twenty minutes, the last rim of light disappeared, and a gloom fell on everything. The Chinese row suddenly ceased, and a hush came over the earth. Nothing moved, not a bird twittered, there was not even a breeze to rattle the palm leaves. I felt I was desperately alone, instinctively held by the awe-inspiring spell of a celestial phenomenon.

Then a streak of light appeared, gradually grew, and the crisis was over. Sounds of prayer came from the house behind me, and the Chinese emerged shaking each other by the hand.

The Sebuyau river was off the usual beat, so it was doubly interesting to visit. I went to many of the Dyak houses, but

the people seemed dull. Tucked away in this backwater they had little aim in life beyond the success of their paddy crops, and the preservation of their domestic peace. I gathered that their own "tuai" or chiefs kept law and order quite effectually, with perhaps a little benefit to themselves.

It struck me that although the people were entirely friendly, they were a trifle uneasy I might meddle with an institution under which they were content.

While walking along a jungle path we passed a high heap of stones and sticks to which my followers contributed with a few well-chosen curses. It transpired that this was a "tugong bula," a Liar's Mound. In days gone by, one Alam arrived hot and breathless in the Sebuyau with a tale that the Skrang and Saribas were bearing down on them with all their warriors. The Sebuyau took no chances, they hustled the women and children to safety, armed themselves, and put their houses into a state of defense. There was no truth whatsoever in the alarm, so in accordance with Dyak custom Alam had a monument raised to his perfidious memory. There were many such memorials in the Dyak country. The custom dated from ancient times.

Dyaks consider a lie an odious crime, and a liar a person who should receive the curses not only of his own generation, but also of those yet unborn. The "tugong bula" starts with a few small branches, some dry twigs, a few stones. But day by day it increases in size until it becomes an imposing monument; for every passer-by considers it a sacred duty to contribute to it. Thus a liar is never forgotten, and is always being cursed. It is an idea that could be adopted with success in some Western nations.

On my return to Simanggang I received orders to proceed to Mukah to do duty under the Resident Capt. Peck. I was not a bit anxious to go. The Batang Lupar was so full of interest, and the prospect of sago-saturated Mukah did not appeal to me at all. Heart-sore, I bid farewell to Simanggang and Fort Alice.

At Kuching I learned that Capt. Peck, who had recently married, was retiring from the Service, and my fate was again in the balance.

My next instructions were to go to Limbang, and in June I sailed there with the Rajah, on board "Zahora."

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The Limbang River was the Rajah's latest acquisition. I have mentioned before how the Limbang people, goaded into revolt by the oppression of the Sultan of Brunei, entreated to be brought under the Sarawak flag.

The Rajah acted promptly, sailed up the river, found a site that appealed to him fifteen miles from the mouth at the foot of Kaban Hill, cleared a small space and tied the Sarawak flag to a tall tree on March 17th, 1890.

The British Government, tardy as ever, ratified the annexation some time later, stipulating that a sum of \$6,000 a year was to be paid to the Sultan, with a proviso that if the indemnity was not claimed within three years, it was to cease.

As a matter of fact, not a cent of this indemnity would have gone to the Sultan. All the prerogatives of the Limbang, except the sovereign rights, were vested in the feudal lords, the Pangirans Bandahara and Di Gadong. The Sultan wanted an opportunity of squashing these two powerful ministers, so he had no compunction in refusing the money, though it was with an air of self-righteous martyrdom.

Meanwhile the Rajah established his rule, and the money disdained by the Sultan was put aside for the laying out, and improvement, of the new station of Limbang, with the result that it became a ready refuge for many harassed Malays from Brunei.

A flourishing little town grew up from nothing, and owing to the picturesqueness of its position, its gardens and miles of good riding roads, it was justly considered the prettiest outstation in Sarawak. It was indeed a change from the traditional military constraint of Simanggang to the freeness of Limbang. It was like living on a country estate of which the Resident was squire. He had a fine bungalow in an old-world garden. A launch was at his disposal to take him away for a weekend shoot, or to spend a few days at the seaside. The roads were like the grass rides of a well-kept park. Official work was limited to a morning stroll to the office to write a few letters or occasionally settle a dispute. It was altogether pleasant and ideal.

The station consisted of a fair-sized Malay kampong inhabited by refugees from Brunei, mostly escaped slaves. Slavery was still going strong in the neighboring State, but runaways became free on reaching territory sheltered by the Sarawak flag, thereby causing much grievance to the Brunei gentry.

A broad road ran along the front past the Chinese bazaar, to where lawns sloped to the river's edge; here in the center stood the square white building that constituted the Government offices, the Law Court, and the local lockup. Sometimes we had five or six prisoners, often they dwindled to one or two. It was very different to the gang of thirty or more we had to look after at Simanggang. The Rajah had been careful not to

flaunt any militarism in the face of Brunei, so there was no fort in Limbang, only a small detachment of Rangers was kept in the background as a special guard.

The Residency and junior officer's bungalow were high on hillocks behind the Court House, clumps of brilliant hibiscus adding vivid splashes of color to the slopes. Farther back rose the range of Kaban, dense with a wondrous mass of virgin jungle, a natural background to the undulating lawns and gardens of the settlement, surpassingly beautiful when the hillsides were smothered in autumn with festoons of a luxuriant orange and crimson bauhinia.

My bungalow was small, and the roof very low, so that the sun beating through made it infernally hot, but it was the first time in my life I had had a house of my own and I felt proudly independent. To start with, I had no bedstead to sleep on; but a mattress on the floor with a good-sized mosquito net answered my purpose until the local carpenter knocked together a cumbersome affair of four posts and a few planks.

O.F. Ricketts was the Resident. He had been stationed at Limbang from the beginning, and had planned and supervised the entire layout of the station. He had founded the post at Trusan when that district was annexed in 1884, so his experience in this direction was unique.

He was a keen shot, and as Limbang possessed buffalo swamps that made ideal snipe grounds, as well as many varieties of wild pigeon, there was always sport for his gun.

Ricketts, though kindness itself, lived his own life. At first I felt somewhat lost thrown on my own resources; it was so different to Simanggang where the white men lived cheek by jowl, sensed each other's joys, sympathized with each other's disappointments. For a while I began to feel lonely, stranded.

I poured out my sentiments in a letter to Bailey. He replied with kindly advice.

"Get off the beaten tracks," he said. "Go into the jungle and note the trees, the flowers, the insects; there is always something fresh to interest. Watch the birds, learn their calls. Take your gun with you and make your evening walks a tour of discovery."

I did what he recommended; there was much in nature to occupy one's thoughts, but bit by bit a riot of imagination swept through me. In my solitary walks daydreams filled my mind. I saw myself a colonel at the head of his regiment, marching past at a grand review; I found myself a statesman settling the

problems of the world; addressing a visionary crowd that swayed to my words.

Daydreams† Yet are they not reflections of the inner flame that gilds the topmost pinnacles of our hopes?

Every Saturday Ricketts took me with him on his walk; it was the weekly chance to discuss the topics of the day. He gave me a drink at the Residency on our return, and I felt afterwards as if I had been out to a party.

Dinner at the Residency was a special event. Ricketts, a perfect host, excelled in all the little niceties of food and drink.

One of my favorite walks was to the top of Kaban Hill. The view all round was wonderful. On one side the Limbang river wound like a silver ribbon through plains of green velvet stretching to a range of low hills behind which lay hid all the romance, the cruelty and oppression of Brunei. On the other, miles of mangrove obscured the streams of Pandaruan and Temburong, fading away in an indefinable dark mass to the foothills of Trusan; and then in the distance ranges upon ranges of mountains, serrated ridges piercing through cloud shadows; and wisps of mist, to untold heights. There stood the backbone of Borneo; the source of its river highways, the guardian of the secret lives of many a strange Murut or Kayan tribe.

We called Kaban "Pisgah" because from its summit we could see into Brunei--the Promised Land.

Sometime before my arrival hidden treasure had been found on the slopes of Kaban. Dyak women searching for jungle vegetables spied a shining object in the soil. They took it to the Rangers' barracks, where it was at once recognized as a golden ornament. A party rushed to the spot and a hoard of gold articles was unearthed. Ricketts heard of the excitement and the treasure trove was given up. Systematic search revealed more objects; there were chains, coins, and ornaments, even a plate; all of solid gold and of ancient Hindu manufacture. Were they hidden on the hill in some dark age by a refugee from Brunei persecution? No one knows.

We went one day and dug over the spot again; a massive gold ring set with a reddish stone was discovered, which the Rajah gave to Ricketts. I wonder--does mystic Kaban hold other secrets?

The Brunei Malay was not a sociable person; for generations he had been downtrodden; and it left him shy and reserved. The Sarawak Malay was responsive to anyone who showed interest in

him. Moreover, he was not too narrow-minded as regards his womenfolk; he would sometimes bring them along for afternoon tea with the "Tuan." All the years I was at Limbang I scarcely had a word with a Brunei woman, and when we happened to pass through a village they usually scuttled into their houses like startled rabbits.

Brunei women never wore "baju" or coats except on gala occasions. They draped themselves in voluminous sarongs of orange, red or yellow, not fastened over the breasts as in the south, but held loosely together by hand. It seemed a silly fashion, because it only left them one free hand for anything else. They talked a gibberish peculiar to themselves; as a matter of fact it took a deal of practice to understand the men, their Malay accent being so much broader than in Sarawak.

The Native Officer, Haji Halil, belonged to the Datu class of Kuching and was a particularly enlightened and able man. As there was really little to do in the office I spent a lot of time with him. He taught me the Arabic characters as well as the intricacies of Mohammedan Law, studied by him during the course of some years' sojourn in Mecca.

We had many a discussion on Islam, and I learned then to respect it as a vital religion, not as a bigoted superstition. The essentials of most religions are much the same; it is when surface details obliterate fundamental facts that ways part. We are prone to imagine that Mohammedans worship Mohammed; nothing is further from the truth; they worship the same God as we do. "There is no God but the true God; and Mohammed is his apostle," says the Koran. Mohammed steered the erring Arabians from gross idolatry to a truer faith. For that alone he merits the esteem of Christians.

Mohammedanism does not reject the teachings of our Lord. It accepts the narrative of Jesus' miraculous birth; it upholds the perfection of Jesus as a Man; but it cannot believe that Jesus was actually the Son of God; it is too materialistic an idea for any mortal to fathom; to a Mohammedan it is blasphemy. The Koran says, "It is not meet for God that He should have any son: God forbid."

That is where Christianity and Mohammedanism can never meet.

When Mohammed was pondering on the faith he should maintain, he studied the ethics of Judaism and Christianity. His leanings were towards the teachings of Christ. He incorporated the theme of the Old Testament in his revelations; he very nearly introduced the doctrines of Christianity. How near we shall never know. It is said that in his intercourse with the Syrian

Christians, Mohammed was repelled by the tendency to worship Mary as "the Mother of God." Had he encountered a more liberal conception of Christianity, the whole aspect of the world might have been changed.

Millions of uneducated Mohammedans know little of their religion beyond the fact that alcohol is forbidden, that they must not eat pig's flesh (both excellent precepts in tropical climates), and that those who do not accept their faith are unbelievers. Westerners on their side are apt to class Mohammedans with the heathens.

Haji Halil used to ask me why it was that Europeans, convinced that Christianity was the only perfect religion, rarely made an open profession of it, or hardly ever attended their church services. It was a difficult question to answer; I confess I was one of those who were at fault. All the same it is odd that adherents of the Christian faith living among people whose religious observances are probably anathematic, seem to take pains to ignore their obligations and thus belittle their religion. I fancy a Mohammedan stranded among Christians would take pride in his devotions. No wonder Malays ponder whether we have any God at all. It certainly encourages them to class us as "Kafir" or unbelievers.

I must say I have felt a worm when "bulan puasa," the fast of Ramadan, fell due, and for a month the Malays allowed nothing to pass their lips between dawn and dusk, not even a cigarette or drop of water; while we upholders of Christianity neither knew nor cared when Lent commenced. It is true Malays can take sustenance during the night, but to carry on their penance is no slight strain in the burning heat.

* * * * *

I had to find a new "boy" as soon as I got to Limbang. A well set-up, good-looking youth named Jappar applied for the job. He had never done any housework, but I liked his look, so engaged him on chance. He proved a great success, showed a quick aptitude for picking up his work, and served me faithfully for many years.

Jappar had a romance in his life. He was originally nothing but a slave boy in the retinue of a Brunei noble whom we will call Pangiran Kadir. Nevertheless he was rash enough to cast eyes of love on his master's young daughter, Pangiran Munah. She secretly reciprocated his affection, but the lovers could not openly show their feelings; they could only declare their love by the language of the eyes. Occasionally when chance offered they might snatch a whispered word or clandestinely press hands, but that was all. They knew full well that if

their secret was discovered, Jappar would disappear. A sure thrust from a needle-pointed kris, a pinch of poison in his food, the stealthy disposal of the corpse, and the dead tell no tales. So the love story went on. When Munah lay on her sleeping mat, despondent at the fate that hedged her in, she would hear her father's boat returning from the fishing ground, one of the slave crew chanting a Malayan love song. She knew it was Jappar talking to her and her heart's hope would spring anew.

When Jappar was sent off to work sago for his master's profit, Munah would flaunt her kerchief from an open window; he could see the gage as he paddled past, and would keep the memory in his heart all the days he was away.

The time came when Pangiran Kadir awoke to the fact that his daughter was of a marriageable age, so an alliance was arranged with one of the noblest families in Brunei. Munah was at her wits' end, but Jappar still sang his love songs.

Then fortune came their way. The old slave hag who tended the women noticed the pining girl and heard the boy's singing. She put two and two together--she had nursed Munah as a baby. A few sympathetic words and the secret was out.

There was nothing the couple could do but elope. The old woman arranged it all. She told them of Limbang across the frontier, where it was said there was no slavery, and everyone had justice. One night when the tide was up Jappar waited in a boat beneath the floor of Munah's room. Stealthily the slats were parted and a bundled form pushed through. He caught it in his arms, and laying it in the bottom of the canoe, paddled away silently into the darkness. It was not long before a hue and cry was raised. The fugitives were speeding along a waterway threading a mangrove swamp when they heard a boat manned by many paddlers coming up behind. Agonized with fright Jappar steered into a backwater, where the boy and girl hid the boat beneath the arched roots of a giant mangrove, and crouching in the evil-smelling morass, sodden with water, tormented by mosquitoes and the fear of crocodiles, they scarcely breathed until their pursuers had passed out of hearing. All the next day they hid, but when night came they set forth again, paddling through devious streams and arteries, not knowing where they were going, until by luck they found themselves on a wide river, and knew they had at last reached the Limbang and safety.

Jappar brought his wife to see her. She was an insipid pasty-faced woman with three or four children, but they still seemed to live happily. Nothing, however, would induce them to be seen over the border. They knew what fate awaited them there.

They told me the old woman who helped them mysteriously disappeared. Knowing the Brunei as I did, I imagined they sewed her into a sack with a few stones and threw her over the verandah when the tide was high.

CHAPTER XI

My first visit to Brunei was when I accompanied Ricketts on a mission to pay the Sarawak session money. Every treaty with the Sultan necessitated by the acquisition of new territory had been cemented by the yearly payment of various amounts. Nothing but hard cash would satisfy the Bruneis, so several iron-bound boxes containing silver dollars were shipped on the launch "Gazelle," and we steamed through the narrow waterways linking up the Limbang and Brunei rivers. No doubt at one time Brunei Mouth was the main exit of the Limbang River until the latter forced an entrance of its own, creating a delta; a maze of intersecting streams in mangrove swamp. Twisting and turning, the passage was so narrow that at one part we were almost in danger of being swept off the launch by overhanging boughs. Nearer Brunei the river suddenly widened into lake-like dimensions. Here the banks were low hills cleared by generations of workers. On a prominent point was a leveled eminence, the site of a Roman Catholic Mission founded by Fr. Antonio di Ventimiglia, who died there in 1691. In early times, Brunei, the metropolis of a State that ruled Borneo, must have been a prosperous city with a population said to have been 100,000. Pigafetta sailed there in 1521 being much impressed with the splendor of its Court. In the early part of the next century the Dutch opened a factory which after various vicissitudes gave way to the East India Company, who traded in a somewhat unscrupulous manner with the natives for a few years, and then finally abandoned the enterprise. From the start of the seventeenth century the glory of Brunei began to depart. Rapaciousness and oppressive measures learned from the early European settlers caused her downfall, until nothing was left but poverty and a bygone tradition.

A bend in the river brings the city into sudden view. When I first saw it, it was so strange, so unlike any other town, it took one aback. The river or creek is lake-like, surrounded by a ring of hills, while huddled on the surface of the water were hundreds of brown huts perched on slender piles. Most of the houses were in the last stages of dilapidation, propped up by their neighbors; but big or small they jostled together in odd patches, skirted by water alleys, with, in the center, a broad highway for rivercraft of every description.

There was no animated buzz of traffic in this Eastern capital, only the dull thud of paddles on gunwales, the call of children playing on the rickety steps of their aquatic homes, and perhaps the beat of a gong. Brunei was then called the

Venice of hovels; it was best seen when the tide was full; at ebb tide the mud banks are exposed, emitting an unpleasant effluvia. All the same Brunei was fascinating and picturesque, even in its decay. The hush of the town was consistent with the oppressed and downtrodden people who abode there.

We steamed slowly up the main waterway and dropped anchor in the center of the town. Haji Halil went off to inform the Minister of Finance of our mission, while we had time to take in the scene around us. Opposite was the Sultan's palace, a little higher in the roof than the houses around, otherwise undistinguishable as a royal residence--the same rickety staging, palm-leaf thatching and torn walls; one or two indolent natives lounging on the landing steps. Around us, boats passed up and down, small canoes, long fishing boats, covered-in sampans. Some of the canoes seemed to carry giant mushrooms, market women in hats a yard across, vending eggs; fruit and vegetables. Other boats, propelled by Chinese, gondola fashion, were floating shops stocked with rolls of colored cloth, jars of tobacco and tins of paraffin oil. I saw a man paddled past with both hands severed at the wrist, a slave punished for theft from his master. A woman was pointed out to me with her lips slit; she had been convicted for slander. "Lex talionis" was the law of Brunei.

Haji Halil returned to report that the Juatan was on his way, but we saw the gentleman in question rowed up to the steps of the palace, where he disappeared. An hour passed; still there was no sign of the minister. Brunei was oblivious to time. Ricketts fumed at the delay; he saw in it a studied discourtesy to the Sarawak Government. At last he could stand it no longer, the whistle was sounded and the crew told to up-anchor. No sooner was the rattle of the chain heard than the Juatan could be seen scurrying to his boat and he was alongside in no time.

Juatan Bakar, in Chinese trousers; a tweed coat and a turban, was rotund in figure with a jovial round face. His post as Chancellor of the Exchequer had possibilities for "perks"; he was commonly regarded as a wealthy man; but he suffered losses too. On one occasion he was awakened at night to find his house surrounded by an armed guard from the palace who literally "at the point of the spear" demanded in the name of the Sultan all his available loose cash. The Juatan "nolens volens" handed over, and was a very sick man for some time after.

His inseparable companion was a cigarette rolled in palm leaf, at least a foot long and an inch in diameter. These "rokok" are peculiar to Brunei and the length denotes the rank of the smoker. After a few whiffs, the glowing end is tapped

out and the super-fag is ready for use again any time during the course of the next day or two

While the cash boxes were being lowered into his boat, Juatan Bakar, well settled into a chair, excused his delay by explaining that the Sultan was resting and he had found it difficult to obtain the royal "chop" or seal for the official receiptso Then, with considerable diplomacy and beating round the bush, he intimated that a little additional cash would be acceptable, not only to his royal master, but also to himself. Ricketts had heard all this many times before and was politely cold; moreover, as the tide was falling, the Juatan was given the hint to departo He went over the side with his smile as broad as ever. He was satisfied he had done his besto As we steamed away I saw him rowed slowly towards the palace squatting among his boxes of silver, no doubt deep in thought as to how much of it he could wrangle for himself, anticipating the inevitable dispute that accompanied the sharing out of the money between the Sultan and his nobles.

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If anyone asked me what was the distinguishing feature of Limbang I should say "buffaloes." These slate-colored amphibious beasts with long arched horns occupied first place in the consideration of the Limbang people. The wealth of a man, Brunei, Bisaya or Murut, was denoted by the number of cattle he possessedo There was a big export trade to Kuching and elsewhere, to supply the meat market, and buffaloes were useful to their owners for churning up swamp land for paddy plantingo Everywhere throughout the district are vast marshy plains where the beasts roam or wallow in mud pools. Going along the rivers, one sees large herds of them standing in the water with just their noses protruding. How on earth the owners could ever distinguish their own animals was a mystery; they all looked exactly alike, and a more uninteresting, expressionless creature could not be found. The method of marking was to make distinctive slits in the ears, but as the variations were limited it was not satisfactory. The Government decided that each owner should brand his property, and irons were distributed. Official Limbang turned out to inaugurate the schemeo A buffalo was tied up, an iron heated and applied to its rump; there was an awful sizzling and smoke, but the stupid beast took no interest in the proceedings and the mark left in the skin bore no relation to the mark on the irono We thought it best to leave matters as they wereo

The buffalo swamps were the haunt of many snipe and, when shooting, the buffaloes would collect in a solid phalanx, steadily bearing down on us until a shot was fired, when the mass would wheel, emitting silly little squeals; it was all the sound these ponderous beasts could makeo

One often came across a little brown urchin of three leading half a dozen buffaloes on a string, but I used to make a long detour when I met one loose on the road.

Raiding buffaloes was the cause of much friction between the people on the frontier of Limbang and Brunei and led to constant feuds. It was the practice in some of the villages to collect the cattle at nightfall and assemble them under the houses with their cords passed through the slatted flooring and tied securely to the rafters. Gangs would come over the border quietly, untie the cords and drive the animals away, leaving the ropes fastened to heavy stones. Sometimes the marauders were spotted, guns were loosed off and international complications ensued. The Brunei authorities, however, never could do anything; they never wanted to, because it was more than a suspicion that the Brunei Pangirans got their share of the looted cattle.

Foremost among the recognized cattle-raid-ers was Datu Kalam, a Bisaya chief of the Tutong, a small stream in Brunei territory. Being a man of action he organized a rebellion against Brunei about the time I arrived at Limbang. He was supported by another notorious agitator, Datu di Gadong, and for some months there was turmoil round the frontier.

The Tutong people tried to involve Sarawak in the disturbances, begging the Rajah to intervene on their behalf, and requesting Ricketts to supply them with Sarawak flags so that they should not be attacked. Of course Ricketts could not do this, but he offered Sarawak protection to any who were driven over into Limbang waters. A party of Sarawak Dyaks, always on the lookout for excitement, did however go over on their own account to aid Datu Kalam.

The Rajah gave instructions that these Dyaks were to be arrested as soon as they returned, or if they gave trouble they were to be attacked and their house up-river burned. As it happened the whole party of twenty-five came down perfectly quietly to Limbang and were packed off to Kuching, where they were punished with imprisonment and fines.

In the meantime matters got worse in the Tutong, the worthless government of the Sultan being quite incapable of restoring order. Many families fled over into the Limbang and we were constantly going up-river to see about the disposal of these fugitives.

On one of these trips a Tutong Bisaya gave us an illuminating account of Brunei treachery. It appeared that the Sultan sent a Pangiran Terjudin with a force to attack the village of Sungei Birow. He called on the inhabitants to surrender, which

they did, on his assurance that their lives and property would be respected. The Pangiran stipulated that twenty-five of them should accompany him as temporary hostages to the main Tutong town. On reaching the landing stage, he picked out four men, had them tied up inside a fence and then set his minions on to cut and slash them at intervals till they bled to death. Seven of the others managed to escape, and our informant was one of them.

The rebellion dragged on for months, but died out after the disaffected district had been fined and then left alone; but a price was set on the heads of the Datus Kalam and di Gadong. They sought sanctuary in Limbang and were allowed to remain provided they indulged in no further hostilities or intrigues. A little later di Gadong stupidly returned to Tutong, was caught and murdered.

Three years later Datu Kalam was up to his old tricks of cattle-raiding, this time in the land of his refuge. He was brought to Limbang and ended his adventurous career with three years' imprisonment.

I have always congratulated myself that I was able to see the workings of a Malay independent State, because Brunei was the last of the ancient Malay Sultanates to retain its freedom of action. Brunei was a Protectorate in the sense that Great Britain controlled its foreign affairs; there was a British Consul for North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak, who resided in the island of Labuan, but he was concerned primarily with the interests of British subjects, while leaving the Brunei government to manage its own internal affairs. It must be said, though, that the Consuls as a rule were always ready to exert their influence in circumstances where Sarawak subjects did not get fair play in the neighboring State. In the atmosphere of Brunei one was wafted back to medieval times. An abased system of feudal service was in existence somewhat similar to that known in Europe in the early Middle Ages. The principal Pangirans or nobles held autocratic sway over the district apportioned to each by hereditary right, or through purchase from the Sultan. The Sultan retained the overlordship and sovereign rights, the Pangiran could exact tolls, taxes and monopolies. The people designated "hamba" were subject to every whim of their lord. No one's property was safe because the Pangiran could appropriate a share or fabricate an excuse to seize the whole. A good-looking girl was hauled off to the Pangiran's harem; a man's wife was forcibly compelled to nurse one of the Pangiran's many progeny. When the noble wished to celebrate a special occasion, a marriage, a circumcision, or a funeral feast, a levy was put on his "hamba" to provide the necessary funds. The sufferers had no redress; theoretically they could appeal to their overlord, the Sultan, but such a

course would only result in increased oppression for themselves. Might was always right in Brunei.

In addition to the "hamba," the Pangiran had his slaves or "ulun," whose duties consisted of purely personal service. Some of these slaves were the descendants of captives taken in the days when piracy was rife; by far the largest number were the victims of debt-slavery. This nefarious system enabled a Pangiran to take the person of a man who had become indebted to him, with his wife and family, and turn them into slaves, mere chattels in his house. The abuses under this institution were endless. Often there was no debt, it was trumped up, or it might be a trifling amount borrowed from the lord to pay his own exactions which, with accumulated interest at fifty per cent monthly, soon enmeshed the debtor. Sometimes a fine was imposed for a suppositious crime that the unfortunate could not pay; the alternative was slavery, and once a slave there was no escape for that man or his family in all their generations. It was an infamous practice contrary to Mohammedan Law, which enjoins that no true believer can be retained in slavery, and no horrors could be worse than the oppression these poor wretches were subjected to.

It can be thus understood how the population of Limbang became swelled by runaway slaves seeking freedom, and how the Pangiran class hated Sarawak for establishing a sanctuary on their frontier.

CHAPTER XII

Partly owing to the Tutong disturbances, a new government station was established at Bidang, two hours steaming up the river from Limbang. It was only a small bungalow with scant accommodation, but it was built at a spot commanding a pretty reach of the river; grassy meadows where buffaloes grazed surrounded the house, soggy land, churned into mud after rain, and the home of countless bullfrogs who boomed a great chorus throughout the night. One or two Chinese put up shanties near at hand for the sale of small goods and it was hoped that the Tutong people who could walk over from the frontier in less than half a day and who were closely connected with the Bisaya population, would make Bidang a center for their trade, if not a refuge from their other cares. This expectation never came to much, but Bidang was interesting as it brought one into closer contact with the Bisaya tribes who lived in that section of the river.

The Bisayas as far as Sarawak is concerned are only found in the Limbang; they constitute a little community about which not much is known. It is said they have an affinity to the Visayas of the Philippines.

Very reserved and content to be left alone to go their own way, they have few interests beyond the welfare of their buffalo herds and the maintenance of their small paddy plots. Their language is distinctive, but owing to their intercourse with Brunei, the men at least all talk Malay. The males who never tattoo themselves like other Bornean natives, are usually dressed Malay fashion in coats and trousers with a gaudy handkerchief wound turban-like round their heads but they have not embraced the Mohammedan religion and use a quantity of their grain for making rice spirit ("borak"). The women ape the Brunei custom and envelope themselves in long sarongs that they are always in trouble to hold up. They build substantial long houses on the river bank, do a lot of boating, but at the same time are excellent walkers.

Bisayas have a pronounced taste for music. Dyaks enliven their festivities with the "engkrumong," a set of graduated gongs laid flat on taut rattan, the whole contained in a box-like stand. A measured cadence is beaten with drumsticks punctuated with the deeper notes of larger gongs, "chanang" and "tawak." The music is crude and the rhythm rarely varies; it beats the time for the war dances the Dyak never tires of. The Javanese have their gong bands or "gamelan." Bisayas celebrate their

festivals with bands of various toned gongs, as many as twenty or more performers taking part. The tunes vary and melodies are produced distinctly pleasing even to the Western ear. I never saw a Bisaya dancing, but they will listen for hours to a band, and it is one of my most charming memories to have heard the ring and peal of a Bisaya orchestra stealing across the water from a riverside house, reverberating into the starlit night, echoing to lose itself in the hills behind.

Besides Bidang the Limbang administration was also responsible for the management of a settlement on the promontory guarding the entrance to the Brunei river. This town was known to the natives as Muara, but the Rajah renamed it Brooketon. Originally this tract of land containing rich coal deposits was ceded to Mr. Cowie of the British North Borneo Company by the Sultan. In 1888 Mr. Cowie sold all the rights to the Rajah. Besides the privilege of mining the coal, the concession included the possession of the land as well as the rights of taxation and the collection of customs dues. The Rajah opened up coal mines that were never a profitable success, but the work provided a livelihood for hundreds of Brunei subjects who would otherwise have been in want. They were allowed free land for their houses and gardens and no taxation whatever was asked, except a small import duty on tobacco, etc., to prevent smuggling into neighboring countries.

The Rajah built a spacious bungalow on a height overlooking the sandy plain that formed the point; he established a light-house also that was a help to ships making for Labuan.

From the bungalow verandah one could see the Island of Labuan less than twenty miles away; sometimes in the clear atmosphere of the early morning the pale blue table top of Mount Kinabalu loomed in the distance, 150 miles away in North Borneo.

It was a treat to be sent to Brooketon for a few days. From the massive wharves where one landed there was a train to traverse the couple of miles to the bungalow. A baby locomotive drawing a trolley with a garden bench down the center, but it was thrilling after months of progressing in cramped boats, or foot-stogging through endless jungle, to feel oneself rattling over rails again. I used to hang over the verandah listening to the engine drawing trucks from the colliery, its snorts of steam, its whistle, the rumbling of the wheels, it all made me feel homesick.

There was never any work to do at Brooketon. As Brunei rejected any responsibility for law and order, some measures had to be taken to preserve peace among the Chinese and Malay mine coolies; but as they managed things very well at the colliery, it was indeed rarely that we were called up to exercise any

magisterial functions. It was just pure holiday for us. Rambles round the plain in the evenings with a gun; there were green pigeon among the "engkudok" bushes; tramps along wayside paths to little Kadayan villages nestling in fruit groves; and always the glorious sea views to contemplate.

Kadayans are one of the riddles of Borneo. Bulkiah, Sultan of Brunei about 1500, a sea-rover and conqueror better known throughout the East in verse and prose as Nakoda Ragam, married a Javanese princess who brought with her many followers to Brunei. These intermarried with the Bisayas, and it is conjectured that the Kadayans spring from this union. They are a quiet agricultural people who keep very much to themselves, with a reputation for being skilled in magic, though they profess Mohammedanism. The men are poor specimens, often physically deformed, but the women have straight figures, are good looking, charmingly dressed in a tight fitting bodice of sheeny black material with big silver buttons, a trailing black skirt looped up on one side and a bright red scarf wound negligently round the head. To see these girls in the distance gives an exact impression of a group of ladies in riding habits.

The Government Colliery was in charge of Mr. Llewelyn, who with his delightful wife lived on another hill across the railway. They were kind to the bashful youth from Limbang, and I felt it a sort of heaven to sit at table again with a white woman. I wonder if our ladies in out of the way parts of the East ever realize that the callow young man from the jungle who has been asked in from a sense of duty, or maybe, charity, and who drinks and smokes, but rarely has a word to say, is really yearning to unburden himself, but finds that solitude has sapped all the initiative and sociability out of him. He would give a lot to make easy conversation, but somehow the words will not come. They leave him alone because "he is so difficult to get on with" when a little womanly intuition and sympathy would make all the difference.

I was introduced to a coal mine at Brooketon. We crouched in a truck and were shot into the cavernous mouth down a steep incliner. It seemed ages going into the bowels of the earth while I watched the opening getting smaller and smaller until it had dwindled to the size of a pea. At the bottom we walked or rather wormed our way along a maze of black passages lined with balks of timber, where grimy natives stripped to the waist hewed out chunks of coal.

It was terribly hot, perspiration poured off me like rain. When I saw an open spot and stood for breath I was grabbed by the shoulder and told to move on, because a fall of coal might lay me out. I began to wonder what would happen if the gallery we were in became blocked, if there was an explosion, or an

earthquaker I cannot say how delighted I was, on the upward journey, to see the opening gradually enlarging, and with what relief I breathed fresh air again.

Some people are happy in the air, others find a livelihood in the depths of the earth or on the bottom of the sea. I thank God that I have been able to find all I desire on "terra firmitas"

From Brooketon it was only a short passage in the launch to reach Labuan. The island was fraught with memories of Sir James Brooke, who in 1844 first recommended it as a British settlement and became its first Governor.

Victoria Harbour offers a fine anchorage for vessels but beyond that, Labuan is a derelict land, only useful as a link in the chain of Empire outposts. At rare intervals a warship would poke her nose in to see if the island still existed; the weekly steamers plying between Singapore and North Borneo called in to enliven the few Europeans marooned there with "stengahs" or German beer, otherwise the port was deserted. Coal had been worked, but much money was sunk to little purpose and the project abandoned. A row of sleepy Chinese shops faced the dreary wharves and a broad road somewhat marred with weeds led inland to Government House and the half-dozen scattered European bungalows. The whole place was somnolent; the only spot where there was any activity was the Cable Station keeping up communication between the West and the very Far East.

Labuan at that time, although a Crown Colony, had been disowned by the Colonial Office and adopted by the British North Borneo Company, who undertook her upbringing with certain conditions. At one period the administrative officer was magistrate, postmaster, excise officer and superintendent of police rolled into one.

It was said that the administrative part had an acrimonious official correspondence (duly docketed and filed) with the postmaster for alleged dereliction of duty and that the magisterial branch fined the excise officer five dollars for not taking out a dog license.

Being a Crown Colony it was permissible for a barrister to plead in the Courts of Law. There was only one barrister on the island and as he generally managed to pull off his cases, there was naturally considerable competition among litigants to secure his services, and he thrived on it.

The pride of Labuan was Government House. Standing in park-like grounds it was built more on the lines of a rambling old country house than anything I had seen out east. Inside

the effect was heightened by the age-old blackened belian floors and paneling, and the wide polished staircase leading to long corridors. The conventional Eastern bungalow is all posts and verandahs. Government House, Labuan, was like a breath of home.

I used to stay with Dr. Adamson, the Medical Officer. He delighted in taking his guests to the Hospital to show them his collection of curious bits of anatomy preserved in spirits. The mornings would be spent thus; in the afternoons we played golf on the plain. Adamson was much exercised about a half-caste who, with very slight pretensions to medicine, had started practicing in the bazaar.

One evening an agitated Chinaman, one of the chief Government clerks, turned up and tearfully implored Adamson to see his wife, who was seriously ill. Adamson demanded to know why he had not been consulted sooner. After considerable questioning the Chinese confessed he had put his wife into the hands of the quack. This touched Adamson on the raw; he bluntly refused to have anything to do with the case, explaining to the mystified man that it was contrary to medical etiquette. I must say my heart went out to the miserable creature now on his knees pouring out supplications to God and the doctor to save his wife's life, but Adamson was adamant. I went to bed distressed by the scene. In the morning I heard that Adamson had spent all night at the woman's bedside and pulled her round. It was characteristic of him. Having taught the Chinaman a lesson, his kindly nature reasserted itself.

Another who showed me much hospitality was Consul Hewett. His official duties were not very onerous, so being an excellent shot he filled up a lot of time shooting. He was an extraordinary great smoker. Every morning he lined his pockets with Manila cigars, all with the ends neatly cut off, and then throughout the day he lit up one from the other; he was never without a cigar except when he was feeding, and his meals never lasted long.

When a lady whom he had much regard for left the East, Hewett offered to look after her favorite Siamese cats, two females and a tom. In the due course of nature the cats multiplied exceedingly, but faithful to the last, nothing would induce Hewett to part with any of them. It was the most awful type of keepsake one could imagine. The cats swarmed everywhere; it was sacrilege to turn one out of a chair to find a seat, and they were a perfect nuisance to the neighbors.

The old Tom did get shot and for a while Labuan was in volcanic eruption.

I often wonder what happened when the Consul left the island, was there a holocaust of Siamese cats, or does the colony still suffer from a feline plague?

CHAPTER XIII

In 1903 Ricketts instructed me to visit the Adang people living right in the interior on the head waters of the Limbang. It was an unusual trip because only two Europeans had penetrated to that district before. Spenser St. John was the first to visit the Adang country in 1858, and he was followed by Ricketts himself.

My tour was decided on rather hurriedly after it had been reported that Saribu, an influential Murut headman, was staying in the bazaar. He knew the "ulu" well and readily consented to act as guide, but when the time came to start, Saribu was very loath to leave, and it required a deal of persuasion to get him on board the "Gazelle." At last we got away and towards evening reached Induk, the farthest point it was safe for the launch to proceed. Here was situated the long house of Orang Kaya Pomancha, the chief of the Bisayas, an excellent man, intelligent, and wielding much influence among all the up-river tribes.

"Orang Kaya," meaning "wealthy man," was an ironical title bestowed by the Sultan of Brunei, who usually awarded the honor and then despoiled the recipient of most of his worldly possessions. Pomancha had contrived to retain his large herds of buffaloes; he was one of the few "wealthy men" who could really lay claim to the title.

He was busy with his farming, but on hearing of my mission at once threw up all the work he had on hand, and decided to accompany me.

My party consisted of ten--two policemen, four Malays, two Muruts and two Bisayas, a mixed grill, but we had no suitable boats for up-river work. As I sat talking with Pomancha, two Murut boats came down the river and stopped at the landing place. "Ah!" he said, "there are the boats we want." Off he scuttled, and soon I saw him squatting on the bank having a conference with the Muruts. It was soon settled, the Muruts seemed quite honored to lend their "temoi" to the white man; out came the gutta and rattans they were taking down to Limbang to sell, while the police readjusted the leaf awnings.

Pomancha winked at me as he passed, "We'll give them some tobacco later on," he whispered.

That night there was revelry in Pomancha's house. Boat-loads of Bisayas from neighboring villages converged on the

house, as the news spread that a Tuan had arrived. By the obscure light of small oil lamps, rows of dusky faces faded away into the far ends of the long house, a medley of squatting forms. Rice spirit was brought forward in huge jars and doled out in small bowls. Gongs and drums began to throb, excited voices shouted for dancers.

At length, after much persuasion and simulated coyness, my "boy" Jappar sprang into the cleared circle. Delicately brandishing a handkerchief in his fingers he slowly gyrated, hands, arms, legs, and body rhythmically undulating to the beat of the music. It was a graceful performance, over too soon for the audience clamoring for more. He had broken the ice, however, others took the floor until all my men were vying with each other for applause.

I had with me a Malay prisoner who was a bit of a character. He was never out of jail; no sooner was he released than he contrived to get back again. In jail he was everything a prisoner should be, obedient, willing and hard-working; out of it he was an arrant scoundrel. This fellow sidled up to me and begged permission to join in the dance. Being on a sort of holiday I gave way. In a jiffy his prison garments were discarded and some borrowed clothes took their place. Then he began to dance. Never have I seen such eloquent grace, every movement was an expression of rhythm. His face had the rapt look of one lost to everything except the message of the gongs and drums; he had us spellbound. Suddenly his measured steps ceased; flinging off his coat, he snatched up a shield and sword and in an instant was bounding and capering in a wild Dyak war-dance.

The music swelled faster and faster in a din that makes men's pulses beat. His war cries filled the house; he made desperate feints at imaginary foes. More and more ferocious he became. I could see his eyes blazing, froth came to his lips. Those about me began to murmur; the flashing sword whirled within an inch of their heads. The police whispered to each other, then quickly rose and fell on the dancer.

"He is mad," they said, as they sat on his recumbent figure. Mamat gave no movement except from his panting chest; his eyes were fixed and glazed. For half an hour he lay still then quietly picked himself up, looked round as if suddenly awakened from a dream, and walked off to the boat. In the morning he did not even remember he had danced.

The next two days we paddled up the river passing scattered Bisaya houses, but in the afternoon of the second day we left the Bisaya district at Sungei Damit, where we struck our first Murut house.

Muruts are supposed to be the earliest settlers in Borneo. They are not indigenous to the country, there are grounds for believing that like the Bisayas they may have immigrated from the Philippines. Of all the Sarawak tribes they are the least prepossessing. Undersized and ill-formed, their features are undistinctive and their bodies usually blotched with a scaly skin disease. The men clothe themselves with a dirty loincloth of fabric or beaten bark; the women wear only a diminutive skirt. All Muruts are addicted to strong liquor, the major portion of their rice harvest goes to the brewing of "borak." With their drunkenness is almost a virtue, and I have seen mothers dip their fingers into raw spirit for their babies to suck. They are also foul eaters; a decomposed buffalo found floating in the river is to them a tidbit. Murut houses are on the communal plan, but, like everything else about them, they are ill-built, flimsy and filthy.

Until the Rajah obtained control of the Limbang and Baram countries, Muruts were the easy prey of the Baram Kayans who raided their cattle, stole their property, and carried off the young children into slavery. Consequently the harassed people edged farther and farther up river, until now there are large tracts of country practically uninhabited. At Sungei Damit there are evidences of the Kayan menace, for there is still the site of an encampment of three thousand Kayans who in 1857 threatened Brunei itself.

At Madalam a little above Sungei Damit, Mount Mulu obtrudes its eight thousand feet; it is clothed in a mass of jungle scarred by limestone precipices. Wherever you look in the Upper Limbang, Mulu dominates the scene.

The river banks here are undulating hills cleared of trees. It is possible yet to distinguish rows of ridges running in parallel lines along the slopes, for years ago when Brunei was at its zenith, a colony of Chinese pepper planters made their homes here and built a fort to protect themselves from the warlike tribes of the interior.

For three days we traversed a district that has no human inhabitants, wild glorious country given up to the birds and beasts of the jungle. The river ripples over its pebbly bed clear as crystal, broken at intervals by rapids where huge rocks impede its course, where the water rushes through narrow channels like a millrace, tumbling and swishing over the smooth-worn boulders.

Jungle-clad hills rise on each side, some so precipitous it is a marvel the trees can find foothold. At every bend, long spits of shingle jut out into the stream over which the boat's keel crunches as the crew haul it along.

Progress is slow, for paddles are useless; poling and pushing are the only means of making headway. Boating in these parts is not the picnic it might seem. A "temoi" is only a dugout twenty feet long and three feet wide. The passenger must recline on a hot mattress beneath a low-pitched awning of palm leaf that almost scorches in the heat of the sun. To sit outside cross-legged on a slatted deck is painful, to stand is unwise with the boat rolling at every push and jerk. For days on end the boat is one's home; when a halt is made at nightfall near a gravel bed, myriads of minute sandflies make life an agony, but one can stretch cramped limbs; fire is lit and food prepared. On the water, a few biscuits, tinned brawn, sardines and cold hard-boiled eggs must suffice.

My many journeys in Sarawak taught me to view a hard-boiled egg with loathing.

At the juncture of the Salidong stream with the main river there are high limestone cliffs, white and bare, the tops fringed with overhanging bushes. Muruts call these rocks Batu Baloi, owing to the metallic sound they give when struck. They are hollowed in tunnels where swifts build nests that are collected by natives to make the bird-nest soup enjoyed by Chinese.

Inside the Salidong river, overshadowed by the sheer white cliffs, the water is of a glorious sapphire blue of great depth and so clear that it is as easy to see fish darting about in their natural habitat as in an aquarium.

We camped for the night on a gravel bed nearby and anxiously scanned the sky for any black cloud that might forecast rain in the river head.

Above Salidong there is a gorge down which the water rushes as through a pipe; should there be a freshet there is no hope of progress. I have often heard of natives held up at Salidong "kerangan" for three weeks waiting for the flow to subside.

On this occasion the gods were with us, the weather was wonderfully clear. We pushed off in the early morning, poling our way into the narrow gorge. On each side high limestone cliffs rose sheer from the water, bare, except where stunted bushes found precarious footing in ledges and crevices. It gave me an eerie feeling, this wall-bound stream where the water ran bubbling with foam. The noise of the punt poles grating on the pebble bottom, the voices of the men urging each other to greater action, were thrown back from cliff to cliff in awesome echoes, like sounds reverberating in a vast empty cathedral.

Soon the stream was running too fast, the punt poles could not hold the boat, so hanging on to the rock face for dear life we hauled ourselves along inch by inch.

It took us a whole day to traverse this gorge. It is a wonderful gateway to the little known land that lies in the interior.

The following afternoon we were at the mouth of the Madihito. There we left the main river. There was a drought in the "uluq" the water was low, only a narrow channel winding through beds of big shingle. All round, the hills had been cleared for paddy planting, and perched on the steepest, close to the water's edge, was the house of Saribu, the chieftain. It was a poor house; my Dyak policeman spat when he saw it. "We build better farming huts," he said contemptuously. It was my headquarters for some days.

Saribu did his best. He was an old man, though his hair hung black and lank; his face was puckered with many lines like old leather creased and cracked, but his eyes were sharp and bright. A single dirty loincloth was his dress; his ornaments, a yellow bead necklace and a tiger's tooth projecting through the upper part of each ear.

Among my followers were an old Murut named Scial and some of his people. Their arrival seemed to embarrass our host and to my surprise they ignored Saribu and retired to a corner by themselves. They created quite a chilly atmosphere; not even when the "borak" was produced would they unbend. It was so unusual that I turned to Pomancha to ask him the reason. A death-like silence fell on the assembly; I felt I had blundered, then Saribu edged towards me and gave a dry chuckle as he nodded towards a cluster of blackened skulls hanging above. "They call me Potong Ribu, the Slayer of Thousands," he whispered. That was all I could learn that night.

Scial and his men left us the next day. That evening when tongues were loosened by drink I asked Saribu: "Why are you called the Slayer of Thousands?"

He gave me a tale of the days when the sword and spear ruled the land. He told of a feast; there was a drunken brawl, and Si Asu, the brother of Saribu, was killed by some men of the Valley of the Bah who fled when their deed was done. Saribu nursed his revenge for months until he heard that the men of the Bah were gone to the jungle seeking guttao. Then he called his young men together and made the long march to the Murid Mountains. At the dead of night they fell on the house of Si Asu's murderers. There was no real fighting, they massacred forty of the women and children, bringing back the heads as trophies.

They hung over my camp bed.

"But what of Scial and his Muruts?" I asked.

"Oh! They!" answered the mighty warrior, "They are kin to the people of the Valley of the Bah and though there is peace now between us at the White Rajah's command, yet when they see that bunch of head fruit their hearts grow cold within them."

The following days I visited houses in the vicinity, returning to sleep at Saribuos. Everywhere I was received amiably and I was able to collect some taxes--\$2 for every adult male a tax that many had evaded for years gone by. That done we started on a tramp to the upper Madihito

The scenery was gorgeous, all jungle-clad hills and mountains. The path was rough, up and down, never level for more than a yard or two. Felled trees made precarious bridges over the deep gullies that intersected the hills. I had a narrow squeak on one of these.

On a steep hillside Muruts had felled the jungle for paddy farming so that trees had fallen into a deep gorge in a mass of interlaced trunks and boughs. Above this entanglement the only path to the opposite hillside was across a bridge of two small tree trunks. My barefooted followers went across unconcernedly; I hope I did not show it, but I funk'd the very sight of it. It was fatal; halfway across my shaky weight was too much for it; one of the logs was rotten, it crumbled under me. Nothing could save me from falling. Luckily one's mind works fast in such predicaments, I was able to throw my arms round the one solid log and there I hung looking thirty feet down on a hideous collection of sharp stakes waiting to impale me. It was a nightmare. For a few seconds Pomancha and the rest stood mum waiting to see what would happen, then they rushed to the rescue. Holding my arms they tied a sash below the armpits and hauled me up. I could not stand on my trembling limbs so sitting astride the log I made my way to the other side in a series of most undignified jerks. Nothing on earth would have induced me to cross that gorge again.

One sign of the altitude we had reached was the scant undergrowth in the jungle; at times I could imagine we were threading our way through an English wood. At one spot we came across some hieroglyphics traced on a tree trunk with a charred stick--rude drawings of seven men, one lying down, a row of sack-like objects, a series of suns, a boat on wavy lines representing waves. My Murut carriers read it at once. Seven gutta hunters had camped here so many days, one of the party was ill, they had collected so many piculs of gutta and were taking it down river by boat.

On some of the ridges we found cleared circles of hard beaten earth, as clean as a swept cement floor--arenas where the magnificent Argus pheasant would dance to ingratiate himself

with his picked hen bird, or at other times, the scene of terrific combats between jealous cocks for the favors of a desired lady. These wonderful birds are rarely seen in the wild state, they are so shy and wary, but occasionally one falls victim to native snares.

Four days walking brought us to the head of the Madihit, still a broad stream dried up by the drought, but we could see rain clouds sitting on the mountains in the distance. Each night we had spent in Murut houses interviewing a concourse of natives, imbibing a quantity of "borak" and collecting tax. There was not much eagerness here to pay their dues. I must say I sympathized with these Adangs; a visit from an income tax collector is irritating to anyone.

We were staying in the house of Pun Sinok. We had barely settled down, evening was drawing on, the girls were trooping down to the river with gourds and hollowed bamboos to fetch the night's supply of water, when a roaring like thunder came from up the stream. Round the bend swept a great frothy wave, hissing over the boulders, tearing huge chunks from the banks. Shrieking, clutching at each other in their fright, the girls scrambled to safety. Not all, for one had been washing clothes in midstream, and the flood was on her before she could escape. Sucked under by the vortex she was carried away we knew not where. In a trice the sluggish rivulet had become a surging river, some drowned buffaloes tore past, grotesquely floating legs in air, boats, trunks of trees, baskets and odd utensils whirled along on the face of the water.

We stood about aimlessly on the bank.

The native murmured, "Hantu" (Evil Spirits), but Pomancha thought otherwise. "It is a cloudburst in the mountains," he explained to me.

Pun Sinok sat alone, motionless, it was his daughter who had lost her life. Suddenly he started to wail. It was not the girl though he thought of, he had remembered she was wearing a bead necklace he had bought for two buffaloes and that touched him to the raw. That evening there was gloom in the house. The women moaned, Pun Sinok and his men sat apart murmuring amongst themselves. I was uneasy for they looked askance at me. Pomancha came to squat near me.

"These people think that you have brought this mishap on them. They are fools as all Muruts are, but ... you understand? Anyhow, Tuan, take no notice and I will talk to them."

He moved off and quietly sat himself in the circle alongside Pun Sinok, and as he nonchalantly rolled some betelnut and

sireh⁷ he spoke softly, ever so softly, every now and then looking up to see what effect his words made. Presently the Muruts began to nod their heads in acquiescence and Pun Sinok rose to haul into their midst a jar of borak. The drink was handed round, some jokes broke the ice, conversation grew animated, the gloom dispersed.

Pomancha told me afterwards he had persuaded Pun Sinok the catastrophe was not due to me--it was the act of the gods as retribution for their evasion of the payment of tax to the great White Rajah now overdue for many years. Pomancha's explanation appealed to the simple intelligence of these people. However I could not get the thought of that poor girl out of my mind, but they proceeded to make merry with copious draughts of borak reinforced with tobacco and gin that Pomancha produced from my store. Death meant very little to them.

As I lay on my camp bed waiting for sleep Pomancha spread himself out on the floor beside me and I wondered where I should have been without his tact.

It is an ill wind that blows no one any good; I had no difficulty in collecting tax from the Adangs after that episode.

I very much wished to go on as far as Batu Lawi, that extraordinary mountain in "ulu" Madihit that stands in a plain by itself and forms a steeple of white limestone eight thousand feet high, but my time was limited and I could only view this outstanding monument of nature from a distance, looking white and mysterious backed by dark jungle-clad mountains.

From Pun Sinok's house it was an easy walk to the main river. We boated down to Saribu's village where we stayed another night, and then homewards.

Flying down rapids that had taken hours to ascend, carried by the swift current through gorges and past rocks at a whirling pace, we reached Pomancha's house in a third of the time it had taken us to make the journey up-river.

7. Sireh isrbetel-vine.

CHAPTER XIV

The next year or two were eventful. In 1903 the relations between Russia and Japan became strained, to develop into war early in 1904. As is usual, when war clouds threaten, trade suffered a deal of depression. Sarawak did not escape. I fancy the Rajah's sympathies were with the Japanese. He was always inclined to distrust the good faith of the Great Powers and attributed war on a weaker nation to be gross jingoism. "The iron fist in a velvet glove" was James Brooke's saying and Charles Brooke's creed.

No one at that time, however, could foresee the crumbling of a big European Power by an Asiatic nation that was just beginning to find its feet. For the above reasons the Rajah's sentiments were wholeheartedly with the Boers in the South African War of 1899-1902. He even suggested that he should act as arbitrator for peace. He wrote an article to a publication called "The Planet" that was too forcible to be printed, and I well remember the Rajah's indignant language at the injustice he considered the Boers had suffered.

Bampfylde retired from the service in 1903 and was succeeded by H. F. Deshon as Resident of the 1st Division⁸. This change, however, did not materially affect us in our faraway corner at Limbang. A loss that did affect all Sarawak was the death of Admiral Sir Henry Keppel. His name is ineffaceably connected with the building of Sarawak as a State. The friend and loyal supporter of James Brooke, he helped him to rid the country of piracy. Charles Brooke served under him as a Midshipman in the "Dido" as far back as 1844.

Keppel revisited Sarawak in 1867 and again in 1900 when the "Little Admiral" then long past his allotted span of three score years and ten, came out East in the hope that he might

8. Resident of the First Division was the highest post in the Sarawak Civil Service. Under Charles Brooke this was a post of great trust and confidence. The Resident in Kuching was usually called upon to give advice on matters affecting other Divisions or the country as a whole. Often he was placed in charge of the government when the Rajah was absent. However, the Resident of the First Division was usually unable to administer Kuching or the First Division without the Rajah's continuous interference. It was a job requiring great patience and tact.

find his last rest amid the haunts he had known so well. The changes that had taken place in Kuching in thirty-three years dumbfounded the old sailor. It was refreshing to hear him call the autocratic Rajah "Charlie," and when a dinner party was arranged for him he apologized for not appearing in dress clothes as he had imagined Kuching was still in the jungle.

One of the worst of the plagues that periodically scourge the East is cholera. I had my first experience of it in 1904. It broke out in the crowded hovels of Brunei and soon spread to Limbang. It is useless to talk of hygiene to natives who would rather die than be compelled to change their mode of life. It reminds me of some Dyaks I once met from Dutch Borneo. They complained bitterly of the sanitation laws imposed by the Dutch Government. A Dyak finds it very convenient to throw all his slops through the floor onto the ground beneath; he keeps his pigs and fowls there in a perfect bog of filth. The Dutch said, in the interests of health, it must stop. The refuse was to be decently burned; the pigs and fowls must have proper pens apart from the house. The Dyaks resisted, were fined, and a small war resulted. In the end the natives offered to capitulate and clean up their houses if the Dutch authorities would guarantee that henceforth no one would die of disease.

Hygienic methods do not always seem to have the effect they should; I read somewhere that when people inured to slums are moved to clean and airy tenements the death rate increases. With cholera it was impossible to prevail on the natives to do anything to help themselves. It was the will of God, so they died off like flies, generally in the awful agony of cramped and twisted muscles. Panic seized the country. The whole atmosphere was depression and gloom; everyone had the same tale of sickness and death. A native would come to the office in the morning on some matter; in the evening we would hear he was gone. All the same, I am sure many could have been saved if they had followed our instructions, but so resigned to fate had they become, so diseased was their mental outlook, that the slightest ailment terrified them and they just laid down and died. At one time it was said there were over a thousand deaths a week in Brunei.

The only precaution we took was to have buckets of disinfectant in the offices into which all coins were thrown before we would touch them. Curiously enough the Chinese were not affected, but they feed better and have more stamina than the ordinary natives. The Muruts up river also did not suffer much. Directly an infectious disease gains ground their custom is to scatter in the jungle, and this wise system of self-isolation keeps infection down.

Just as the cholera began to abate, smallpox broke out. However deadly this disease may be, it is slower in its effect

than cholera and the native will not recognize its danger. I have seen a mother in the grips of the illness nursing her small baby absolutely oblivious to the consequences.

We went in manfully for vaccination, and after most of the headmen had submitted themselves to the operation, the rest of their followers formed the idea that this peculiar custom of the white man was the thing to be done. In fact it became a fashionable pastime, and it took a lot of talk to convince people that one performance was sufficient. At Bidang I vaccinated natives with a penknife at the rate of two hundred a day. I often wondered what extraordinary virtues they imagined I had inoculated with.

As a counterblast to the general depression I received my promotion to the rank of Assistant Resident, with an increase of salary of \$10 a month. Altogether I was now drawing \$160 per mensem--about £200 a year--and felt quite rich.

All the same, things were terribly dull in Limbang, what with epidemics and trade depression; therefore I was more than pleased to hear that my application for home furlough in June had been granted.

Strictly speaking, furlough could not be claimed until ten years' service was completed, and then one was entitled to fourteen months' leave; but the Rajah occasionally allowed his junior officers to split the period and take seven months after each five years' service. Colonial service furlough since the first World War has been vastly improved; it is rare for an officer to serve more than a three years' spell of duty without home leave. I am sure this concession is in every way a wise move. The ten years on end is an absurd length of time to stay in the tropics. The longer one remains in the East the more languid one is apt to become; by shortening the periods of service an officer can retain his vitality and that is to the mutual benefit of himself and the government. I received about £30 towards my passage money, the rest I had to save out of my small salary; nowadays officers are lucky enough to have their fares paid for them.

I traveled home with Bailey in the original P. & O. "Chusan," a real corker for rolling, and spent six glorious months in England and Belgium.

It is curious, after being out of England for years, how quickly one instinctively falls into the order of things. As soon as I landed at Dover I felt I had never been out of the country. And London--the crowds, the traffic, the lights--it was not a bit odd to be suddenly dropped into the hurly-burly after seven years in the jungle.

I was in Belgium when the time came to return. As luck would have it a railway strike broke out. I got as far as Brussels to find it was impossible to proceed to Marseilles, so returned to Bruges, and telegraphed the Rajah, who was in London. He wired back, "Return when possible by land or sea." I puzzled to know what he meant, but anyhow I took a fortnight extra leave by which time the strike cleared and I started for the East.

* * * * *

In March 1905 I was back again in Limbang to find the district very slowly recovering from its epidemics.

In January the Rajah had completed negotiations with the government of British North Borneo for the transfer of the Lawas river to Sarawak. The new district adjoined Trusan territory, and its sparse population, mostly Muruts, was allied and, in many cases, intermarried with the Muruts of Trusan and Limbang. British North Borneo had never found Lawas a profitable proposition and were quite prepared to transfer the financial obligations that encumbered the territory to the Rajah. Thus the Rajah undertook to pay £4,000 to the British North Borneo Company in addition to a yearly payment of over \$2,000 to the Sultan of Brunei and the Pangirans who had "tulin" or feudal rights over the land.

It was not the consideration of acquiring more country that prompted the Rajah to buy ascendancy over Lawas; it was ever his great scheme to consolidate Sarawak by incorporating bit by bit the Brunei territories. From the day that Charles Brooke succeeded his uncle as ruler of the Rajah, the desire to release thousands of natives from Brunei oppression by assimilating Brunei territory into his beneficent rule never left his mind. Under this impelling impulse the districts of Baram, Trusan, Limbang and Lawas were absorbed into Sarawak by tactful cession, with, in every case, the approval of the British Government. Brunei itself, alone, remained a hotbed of trouble to its own subjects and the neighboring States.

Many authorities, including the British Consul, could see that the only obvious future for Brunei was under the Sarawak flag. Terms had been offered the Sultan that would have relieved him of all his financial embarrassments and given the Rajah the opportunity of liberating the country from an effete government. Pride alone held back the Sultan from acceptance, though he had no objection to the Rajah privately purchasing from the Malay nobles, and even from himself, considerable tracts of land on the Brunei river where Brunei subjects were permitted by the Rajah to settle without payment of anything in the nature of rent or taxes.

After the cession of Lawas had been approved by the Foreign Office, the Rajah was led to believe that the British Government would back him up in any undertaking between himself and the Sultan for a transfer of the latter's territory, and the British Consul gave his services as intermediary in the ensuing negotiations. Already the Rajah imagined his dream of Brunei under Sarawak was coming true.

He made his plans for the future. At Buang Tawar, a site on the river some way below Brunei Town, the Rajah had purchased the rights over the land. On one of the hills he proceeded to erect what was officially called a bungalow; it was, however, built of heavy ironwood with all the characteristics of a Sarawak fort. Fashioned in sections in Kuching, it was soon put together. Round about the building roads were made. Secret orders were deposited at Limbang to the effect that immediately the Sultan agreed to a transfer of his State, an officer was to proceed to Buang Tawar with a guard of Rangers and take up residence in the "bungalow." Eventually it was the Rajah's intention to found a new city of Brunei at Buang Tawar where it could be built on land with an adequate supply of fresh water. For shipping also it was much more accessible.

In years past the site of the original Brunei had been at or near Buang Tawar, so to the inhabitants it had historic associations. Furthermore, the Rajah reasonably opined that the new government station would soon become a harbor of refuge for the oppressed classes and thus, by gradual disintegration, hasten the end of old Brunei with its debased traditions.

Arrangements were made to provide the Sultan and his two principal ministers, the Pangiran Bandahara and Pangiran di Gadong, with ample pensions, while other claims that were bound to eventuate would be dealt with as they arose.

The stage was set for the hoisting of the Sarawak flag, but still the Sultan hovered over the Consul's proposals, fondly hoping that by waiting he could obtain better terms. And there the matter remained for the time being.

A fortnight after my return from leave, Ricketts left for Europe on eight months furlough. I was appointed to act in his place. For the first time I experienced the thrill of administering a station. I moved into the Residency, a large wooden bungalow perched on a hill with a wide verandah commanding lovely views of the river. At the time it was built there was an insane craze for corrugated iron roofing. Consequently the bungalow heated like an oven in the daytime; in heavy storms the rain rattled on the roof like a hundred kettledrums. The most curious effect took place at night. I would wake up hearing the soft pad of naked feet in the rooms; I could swear that

doors were being opened and closed. It made my flesh creep, for I felt sure the place was haunted. It was some while before I realized that the iron roof, contracting with the cool night air, was the cause of my frights.

In the cadets' bungalow I had two of the best assistants anyone could have--Stuart Cunynghame, later on Commandant of the Sarawak Rangers, and J.E.M. Bingley; both had seen service in the army and loyally supported me.

I had brought out with me a gramophone, one of the first to reach the interior of Sarawak. It was the old-fashioned type with a huge trumpet-like horn.

Kind people at home provided the horn with a case and then my troubles began. I had to carry the precious thing. At Bruges I pushed it and myself into a crowded railway carriage amid the muttered curses of my fellow passengers. It refused to sit anywhere except on my knees. At Tourcoign the Customs looked askance at it; they said it was a musical instrument and must pay a fabulous sum to enter France. With English obstinacy I argued until the train was on the point of starting, then they bundled me and the thing back again into the compartment, much to the disgust of the overfed bourgeois therein who loathed the "sacré trompette" as much as I did. All the way to Marseilles I nursed that beastly horn and then with unholy glee shoved it into the arms of the man from Cook's.

The gramophone, though, was a great boon at Limbango. The first time I put a record on, Bingley was sitting on the verandah steps. He was very quiet and then I noticed his eyes were bathed in tears.

"What a fool I am," he said, "but it somehow brings home back to one."

I have felt like that when native gongs in the far distance have made me think of summer evenings and church bells stealing across the countryside.

They have wireless now in the jungle, and I can imagine strong men going moist about the eyes when they hear the strokes of Big Ben.

CHAPTER XV

The Rajah paid Limbang a visit in May. He stayed at the Residency and in accordance with his custom, his cook took command of the kitchen and his servants took charge of the household. I was a guest in my own bungalow. It was not altogether a satisfactory arrangement, because the Rajah's servants had no great concern for one's crockery or glassware and it required more nerve than I had to ask the Rajah to replace breakages.

I possessed some bulbous tumblers rather larger than ordinary, into which the Rajah measured his invariable drink of half claret, half water. The first morning he was rather late for his ride. He complained of a head. He put it down to my glasses. After that he used the tumbler provided for his teeth cleaning and was happy.

The Rajah had a prejudice against napkins done up in floral designs. One day while my "boy" was admiring his efforts to decorate the table the Rajah appeared on the scene and flung all the offending objects on the floor.

Another characteristic of the Rajah's was his abhorrence of anything in the nature of luxury, one might almost say of comfort. When traveling on a launch he preferred sitting on an up-turned box to the cane chairs usually provided; instead of the folding table supplied for meals, he insisted on the food and crockery being perilously balanced on the cabin skylight. I think he liked to impress upon his officers that he could "rough" it up country with the best of them.

I stayed with the Rajah for a few days in the bungalow at Brooketon. In the big verandah were those ease-promoting chairs dedicated in the East to planters and called "Kudat" chairs, with extended arms upon which the weary "nabob" could rest his legs. Hearing weird sounds early one morning, I came out to find the Ruler of the country busily engaged sawing off the leg rests. With some difficulty I prevailed on him to let the gardener finish off the job. Afterwards as he surveyed the denuded pieces of furniture he was like a child who had had its dearest wish granted. "Thank goodness that's done!" he kept on saying. "I have always hated those chairs."

It was a great pity to my mind that the Rajah did not take the opportunity that presented itself at this time to visit the old Sultan in Brunei. There was no question of ill-feeling

between the two, as has been represented. The relationship was in fact very cordial. The Rajah evidently felt some diffidence in personally butting into the delicate negotiations, for the transfer of Brunei was a matter that he considered could be better conducted by the Consul. The Sultan on his part was actually in favor of relinquishing everything, but was held back by one or two of his Ministers who were far from inclined to give up their nefarious practices. A personal interview between the two Rulers might have straightened out the Sultan's problems.

The Rajah returned to Kuching and shortly afterwards the Sultan sent me a message requesting to see me. Accompanied by Haji Halil I went over to Brunei and was met by Juatan Bakar who conducted me to the rickety landing steps of the Palace. We walked gingerly along a jetty of very rotten wooden laths to the door of the Balei, the Audience Hall. Beneath was the stinking mud of Brunei; lounging or squatting on the pier were odd hangers-on of the Court. At the entrance to the Hall the Sultan was waiting--a dignified old man just on seventy years of age, encumbered with a galaxy of names and titles: Yang di Pertuan Sultan Hasim Jalil al Alam Akamaddin ibni Almarhum Sri Paduka Maulana al Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin.

He was dressed in a loose jacket and wide trousers of yellow silk and a sarong woven in gold; on his head he wore a yellow fez. Clasp my hand with his right, the other laid on my shoulder, he led me up the room like a fond father, to a chair on the right of the throne. The hall was common and barn-like, relieved only by some gaudy drapery festooned round the top of the walls. The throne on a dais was reminiscent of an old second-hand four poster bedstead in dull red, picked out in tarnished gold paint. The Sultan sat on a chair below the steps of the throne; in front of him was a large round table, early Victorian, at which the Juatan and Haji Halil seated themselves. All round the room on the matted floor squatted a fringe of Court officials.

I felt considerably embarrassed sitting alone with every eye scrutinizing me. There was dead silence. Servants came in with cups of atrociously sweet coffee, the Sultan bowed, I bowed, and we sipped. Then a cigarette a foot long tied with gold ribbon was presented and a lighted candle two feet high placed on the floor before me. I was rather at a loss what to do with all this paraphernalia, but felt that something was expected of me, so I lit the mammoth tube and took a whiff.

All this time not a word was said.

Then the Sultan told the Juatan he was pleased to see me, the Juatan passed it on to Haji Halil who referred it to me. I reciprocated the compliment; it reached the Sultan by easy stages. He bowed, I bowed.

I gathered this round about conversation was the Court procedure. It was slow, but had the advantage of allowing the principals to frame their replies before the question reached them.

After that the Sultan made many cordial remarks about his respect for the Rajah, ending up by preferring one or two petty claims for the rendition of runaway slaves. I could only reply that I would refer the requests to the Rajah. The conversation flagged. Did the Sultan expect me to touch on the larger issues at hand? I had no mandate, so kept quiet, waiting anxiously for any hint of what was in the Sultan's mind. But nothing came. The Juantan indicated that the audience was at an end. We took our leave and, escorted by the Sultan, cautiously picked our way over the rotten flooring. The Juantan accompanied us back to the "Gazelle" where he attempted to improve the shining hour by asking for a loan of \$500.

I puzzled over this state reception. The impression left on me, was the Sultan's desire to emphasize his friendliness towards the Rajah and Sarawak. Haji Halil thought the Sultan wanted to see what sort of fellow had been left in charge of Limbang during Rickett's absence, though he agreed that considerable honor had been paid me. He reproached me for a breach of Court etiquette. I forgot to carry away my candle, but I kept the cigarette until it became mouldy.

It must have been one of the last audiences the old Sultan gave, for shortly afterwards he fell through the floor of his palace, sustaining injuries that more or less incapacitated him until his death in May, 1906.

The negotiations between Sarawak and Brunei appeared to be proceeding evenly, when as luck would have it, Consul Hewett went home on leave. The Rajah also returned to England about the same time. Hewett was replaced by an officer of the Malayan Civil Service. A month or two later the news filtered through that the Sultan had agreed to the appointment of a British Resident in Brunei.

It must have been a bombshell to the Rajah. His dream of a Sarawak-Brunei was shattered. The feeling in Brunei itself was generally opposed to the change. Several Pangirans came to me. One and all said that if Brunei could not proceed with its age-old constitution they would prefer to come under Sarawak, for they knew the Rajah and his methods, and they did not know what would happen under British administration.

I found Juatan Bakar sitting in my verandah one evening. He started straight away to discuss the situation. He said all Brunei from the Sultan downwards wanted the Rajah. Would Sarawak help them in their present predicament?

I could only point out that it was too late, the Sultan had had his chance and let it slip from him. Further, I could not reconcile the Sultan's present attitude with the published statement that he had invited His Majesty's Government to appoint a Resident. The Juatan said the Sultan had been coerced into signing the treaty by a threat that if he refused, a British warship would visit Brunei and compel his abdication. There is no foundation I know of for this assertion, but it shows what tales were flying about Brunei at this time.

In any event it is difficult to understand the motives of the Foreign Office. As far back as 1874 the Rajah had strongly urged the British government to assume control of the sovereign power of Brunei, which included at that time, not only the districts of Trusan, Limbang and Lawas, afterwards ceded to Sarawak with the consent of Great Britain, but all the territory handed over to the Chartered Company of British North Borneo in 1881. When Brunei was stripped of most of her possessions, Great Britain stepped in and took over an impoverished country forming an enclave within the very territory granted by her to Sarawak.

Undoubtedly some restraint was necessary to curb the injustice and oppression exercised by the Sultan and his ministers, but that could have been as effectively performed by the Rajah as any other; perhaps better, because no fault had ever been found with the Brooke method of native administration. As it was, the inclusion of Brunei offered no benefit to the British Empire; it was opposed to the wishes of the people, and it was detrimental to the interests of Sarawak. For months after Brunei had virtually become a British possession, numbers of the Pangirans visited Kuching with schemes to bring their country under the Sarawak flag--designs that were naturally not listened to--and some of the people moved over the border into Limbang to be under the Rajah's rule.

The fate of Brunei having been determined, life in Limbang became rather a tame existence. Ricketts returned from leave in November and Bingley went to Lawas as Officer-in-charge, only to die there six months later of fever. Communication between stations was so uncertain that we never heard of this fatality until some days after it had occurred.

I suffered too, in a way, from this isolation. I was thrown from a little dun-colored pony called Beppo at Limbang and fractured my collar bone rather badly. I had to take a boat to Broketon, wait there some time for a launch and only got to the doctor at Labuan forty-eight hours after the accident when the bone had stiffened. I never got it straight again. In these days with all stations linked up with wireless and telephone there is no likelihood of that sort of thing happening.

In January 1906 I was promoted to Resident 2nd Class, and later on in the year was summoned to the General Council of Residents and Senior Native Officers that assembled in Kuching every three years. That year, however, I was unable to attend to take the oath. I took instead six weeks leave to visit old Larkin in Johore. The old man was the same as ever, but the coffee plantation had become a forest of rubber trees. I happened to come in for the Sultan's birthday celebrations and all the extraordinary hospitality that Johore Bahru excelled in.

An outstanding memory was my first ride in a motor car. It was in the Sultan's latest Mercedes driven by himself. I can vividly remember how I hung on to the edge of my seat as we whirled round the sharp corners of narrow roads never intended for such machines, and nearly got piled up on a string of bullock carts slowly moving along the center of the road.

The year 1907 rolled by quietly. I traveled a good deal up-river and at Limbang itself introduced football, which caught on amazingly. Part of the plain near the sago factories was cleared and leveled by the players and soon we had quite a good team capable of beating an eleven of Sikh police from Brunei, notwithstanding the fact that they wore boots while our men's feet were bare.

On the suggestion of my old pal Reggie Douglas who was on a visit, we started to lay out some golf links. He and I spent a few mornings in the cattle ground with the result that a really good course began to emerge. Hills, dells and streams all came into the scheme. One conical hill with a green perched on its summit, we called "Spion Kop." I believe the links, much improved, still exist, and are quite a feature of Limbang.

Shooting was a prime recreation during the winter months when the northeast monsoon brought in snipe and often wild duck. Snipe we usually found in the vast buffalo swamps of Limbang, and Trusan. Going up-river in the launch we would anchor off a well-known "laman" and walk up the plain. It was strenuous work in a broiling sun, up to our knees, sometimes to the thighs, in viscous mud, with the cr-k-k-k of snipe getting up all around us. I do not claim to be a good shot, but we generally managed to get a respectable bag, especially towards the end of the season when the birds were slow on the wing, heavy with food, preparatory to their long flight to China or northern India.

What a joy it was to return to the launch for a long drink, to bathe sitting in the dinghy pouring over our bodies cool streams of water, baled from the river with an old biscuit tin. I have longed for a swim, but crocodiles were everywhere.

Later in the afternoon when the sun was sinking, green pigeons would flight across the river. This is pretty shooting, for a pigeon flighting is like the proverbial greased lightning.

Occasionally a party of us would go to Sundar in the Trusan, where birds were unusually plentiful, and stay there three or four days in the little government bungalow. We fed on snipe and pigeon, morning, noon and night. I never get tired of a snipe, but a green pigeon is an insipid bird, and after a few meals one hates the sight of it. Very often we bagged a "pergam" or Emperor pigeon, the largest of the species, and he made a welcome variety to the diet.

Once on my way to Trusan in a small boat with a mat awning, we halted at the side under the shade of the mangrove. It was hot; the awnings were pushed open while we fed. One of the crew was casually looking up, when he gave a cry, and there above us on a branch was one of the most deadly of snakes, a "chinchin mas," a black adder with golden rings. Startled by the cry, the reptile dropped plump into the boat. Pandemonium ensued. Everyone armed himself with a "parang." Cautiously, a bit of the slatted decking was raised in the bows; the adder wriggled to the stern; when that was investigated he moved elsewhere. No one knew where he would appear next. At last he was cornered, spitting terribly, and off came his head; but it was a real "mauvais quart d'heure."

I shot my biggest crocodile in the Trusana. He was sunning himself on the bank and yawned disdainfully as the launch came abreast. My bullet went straight down his throat. He was nearly 13 feet in length and of huge girth, but he was not a man-eater; at least, we found no human remains when we cut his tummy open.

In the beginning of the next year (1908) some Dyaks, under the leadership of Sampai, raided a Murut village at Padas in British North Borneo and killed eighteen persons. The raiders then ran, some to Pandaruan, which was in our district, and some to Temburong, under Brunei jurisdiction. The North Borneo government made strong representations about this uncalled-for massacre, so it was arranged that I should go up the Pandaruan to arrest the Dyaks in our waters, at the same time that the British Resident proceeded up the Temburong on a like mission. There were twelve of the raiders in the Pandaruan and I did not know how to nab them. Anyhow I went off in a boat with eight Rangers, their arms carefully concealed.

We reached a Dyak house belonging to an ex-Sergeant of Rangers. I explained the difficulty to him and he undertook to call the malefactors to his house that night for me to talk to them. By the time it was dusk they had all assembled. To my great relief they were very meek and mild, not a bit the type of swashing buccaneers I had expected. I told them what fools they were and that they had better come with me to Limbang and rely on the Rajah's judgment. Very surprisingly they agreed at

once. I made no effort to put them under restraint, and that night they slept round my camp bed more like my guard than a gang of murderers under arrest. Any one of them could have escaped if he had wanted to, but so great was the Dyak faith in the Rajah, that it never occurred to them. In the morning, with their spears, parangs and shields, they marched down to my boat where I provided them with paddles. A crowd of relations and friends assembled on the bank to see them off.

Just as I had taken my seat, a panting Dyak rushed up and handed me a note. It was from the British Resident to say he had rounded up the rest of the party, but they had shown fight and escaped. I knew if this news got abroad I should not see my charges for dust, so hastily gave the order to push off, and I had the lot under safe detention in Limbang before nightfall. Had that messenger arrived five minutes earlier I could not have done that.

Nearly all the Dyaks who had escaped at Temburong gave themselves up to us in Limbang later on. The Rajah, with his usual contempt for international proprieties, telegraphed to Ricketts from England to execute the leaders and imprison the followers. The upshot of it all was that the North Borneo yacht "Petrel" took the gang away, and after trial I believe Sampai was executed and the rest imprisoned.

CHAPTER XVI

In March, 1908, I suddenly received orders to go to Bintulu as Acting Resident. I had served seven years in the Limbang, and I felt the uprooting. The pain was mollified by the agreeable anticipation of having a station of my own.

Bintulu was one of the most isolated places in Sarawak. Only one officer sufficed for the district. The nearest station was Mukah, seventy-five miles along the coast; the nearest medical assistance was at Kuching or Labuan, both two hundred and fifty miles away, with no means of communication if help had been needed. To make matters worse, from November to March the northeast monsoon pounded the river bar into such a fury of surf that no vessel could safely negotiate it. During those months the only anchorage was in the shelter of Kidurong Point, nine miles away. The mails had to be dropped there and carried overland.

It was late in the afternoon when the paddle-steamer "Kaka" rounded Kidurong carrying me on board. I saw a rocky promontory jutting into the sea, tree-clad, except at the extreme point where the rollers broke on brown crags, flying into white spray, almost splashing a stunted whitewashed lighthouse on the top.

From the point the dense jungled coast, edged with a strip of white sand, swept in a wide arc to a somber group of casuarina trees marking the entrance to the Bintulu river. Through the trees, Fort Keppel peeped white amid the universal green; farther along the river, hundreds of brown roofs indicated the town, and in the far interior, the Tubau Mountains shows blue, furrowed with dark shadows in the light of the sinking sun.

We anchored off the mouth, and after a while a boat came out to us manned by a crew of prisoners. I bundled into it with my baggage, and as the "Kaka" steamed away, I felt very much as if I were being marooned on a desert island. At the Fort, my predecessor, E.A.W. Cox, was still waiting for a ship to take him on his way to home and a pension. He was a married man with two small boys. They had been stationed at Bintulu for two years, and he confessed to me that life had been a nightmare at times. If his wife or children had been taken ill he could have done very little to help them. Worse still, if anything serious had happened to him, his wife would have been left stranded among a lot of natives. I take off my hat to the pluck and loyalty of women like Mrs. Cox who brave the lonely

spots of the Empire. The two children had picked up some realistic games from their savage surroundings. Going into the sitting room one morning, I found them playing at head-hunting. The younger boy was lying on the floor, while the elder stood over him, making vicious prods with a native spear, each time mercifully missing his brother's head by an inch or so. It made me rather queer, but the parents seemed used to such incidents. A few days later the family were carried away to Kuching, and I was left alone.

To anyone who finds pleasure in being apart from his fellows, who can live his own life content with the contemplation of superabundant Nature, or the characteristics of interesting people, I can recommend a term at Bintulu. During the time I was there, I was thrown entirely on my own resources. For months, the only English I heard spoken was from the lips of a Chinese clerk. I must have missed my own countrymen, for I can remember walking along the sands conversing in a loud voice with myself, just for the sake of hearing my mother tongue. But I was never dull, or lonely, and when the time came, I hated the thought of exchanging an almost idyllic existence, for the chatter and conventions of a more elevated society.

The fort was more comfortable than most. The Ranger guard occupied the ground floor. The Court Room and my quarters comprised the first floor. From the windows, there was a grand view of the sea. I could sit for hours watching its varying moods and hues. In the mornings, when the winds blew fresh from the land, the fishing fleet sailed out, big open "barongs" with flattened bows, and a cumbersome square sail. If the wind was light, and the tide contrary, the crew took their oars; long sweeps with shovel blades, and one could hear the swish and chonk of each stroker, until the boats had crossed the bar. About midday, or thereabouts, a greyish band danced along the surface of the water heralding the breeze from the sea, and as dusk fell, the fishing boats came home from the daily toil.

It was not always so. Sometimes gales blew, and through a veil of slanting rain, one could see the foam on angry waves, while the booming thud of surf on sand warned the fisherfolk there was nothing for them to do that day.

I cannot say which I liked best, the thrill of a wild sea with all the elements in a fury, or the peace of a glassy ocean, shimmering in the sun, with a gentle breeze whispering soft music through the feathery casuarinas.

All the men of Bintulu were sailors, they had the stamp of seamen all the world over--bluff, hardy and hearty.

I had a wonderful fresh fish every day--"ikan merah," a mullet; "ikan leda," a species of sole; and commonest of all,

"ikan duehr" a flat fish that one could eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and never grow tired of. Custom ordained that as the fishing boats returned in the evenings, they should throw some of their catch onto the fort landing stage for the use of the staff and garrison. The inferior fish were got rid of in this way, so my Chinese cook used to meet the boats, and for a few cents could purchase the pick of the haul.

Altogether Bintulu was the cheapest station I ever served in. Meat was unprocurable except when we killed one of the government cattle on high festivals, but chicken never cost more than ½d. and eggs were less than ½d. each; milk and butter were amply provided by the government herd.

I have never experienced quite the same sensation of exaltation as I did at lonely Bintulu. There is an extraordinary sense of self-importance being lord and master of such a district, cut off from the rest of the world. I can imagine nothing quite like it, except perhaps the king of a South Sea Island, or, to go back to feudal times, a Norman duke lording it over his domain. I knew that all matters rested on my judgment, that the people looked up to me as the arbiter of their affairs. I felt up-lifted in a little sphere of my own, where responsibility became smothered in a desire to do something for the people, and be well regarded by them.

Bintulu town comprised five or six thousand inhabitants, all Melanau, converted to Mohammedanism, but retaining most of the superstitions of their pagan forefathers. Thus, when I heard night after night the sound of drums and gongs coming from the kampong, I knew very well that medicine women were busy performing the "bayoh," exorcising the evil spirits from the sick patient, and many a time I have watched a "jong"--an elaborately decorated model boat--bear the malignant gods slowly down the tide and out to sea.

On one occasion there was an epidemic of fever in the town, and hundreds of coconut shells, complete with oil and wicks, were lighted and launched on the river at night. Imagine the fairylike effect of these myriad of dancing lights, moving down stream, carrying the prayers of a stricken people.

From the ethnographical point of view, Bintulu district was particularly interesting. Including Malays and Chinese, there were at least nine different races, or tribes, each possessing their own peculiar customs, language and characteristics.

I have mentioned the Melanau; they, too, had their own language, but with the exception of a few women, they could speak Malay; consequently Government officers never really troubled to master their lingo. Sea Dyaks, always on the

lookout for fresh farming land, had spread over from the overcrowded Rejang and Batang Lupar regions, and firmly established themselves in the Sebauh and Pandan tributaries and in the adjacent Tatau river. In the head-waters of the Bintulu there were Kayans, while dotted about were settlements of Kadayans, Punans, Bukitans and Penans.

One saw little of the last mentioned tribes; for the most part they lived inland in scattered communities, subsisting on the produce of their land, or on credit advanced them by Chinese traders who got their several hundred per cent profit on the jungle produce brought in to them periodically. They did it at their own risk, though, because the Courts refused to recognize such debts.

As soon as I had accustomed myself to affairs in the main river I made a visit to the Tatau, sailing there in the cumbersome Government "barong" with a crew of prisoners. This "barong" had the unwieldy square native sail that was only of service when running before the wind. After consulting with local experts we changed the rig to fore and aft. Sailing was then much more pleasant and we could tack. However, the Rajah got to hear about it and he administered a sharp rap on my knuckles. He wrote it was folly to interfere with native customs, for if generations of native sailors had found the square sail sufficient to answer their purpose, it was not for an inexperienced European to think he could improve on it. I daresay he was right, but I managed to retain the new rig.

Tatau was chiefly populated with Rejang Dyaks, the worst brand of the article, independent and truculent. I had a brush with them straight away. A chief, Ambau, had collected a gang of youths with the intention of attacking some Kayans who they alleged had murdered Dyaks. This little game had to be stopped at all costs. At my summons Ambau appeared before me, and in a most arrogant manner declared that I could say what I liked, but he was going to follow his own inclinations and the Government could go to the devil. All his followers backed him up enthusiastically; they made me most uncomfortable--in fact I felt a helpless fool before this shouting, gesticulating crowd. I watched them swagger off to their boats, intent on mischief, with a sinking heart. The other Dyak chiefs warned me to be careful what I did because they were out for blood. Later in the day I sent for Ambau again, hoping that a quiet talk would make him see reason. He was not escorted by so many friends this time, but was just as obdurate. I lost my patience, called for the two policemen with me and had Ambau arrested there and then. He was carried off to the lock-up shouting imprecations, and so flabbergasted were his companions that they never moved a hand to help him. I was inwardly very nervous as to the attitude of the rest of the Dyaks. My only hope was to strike while the iron was hot.

Thank goodness, they seemed too stunned at the unexpected denouement for any further truculency. I demanded so many old jars, brass guns and gongs as a bond of their good behavior. In two days time a sorry procession of would-be warriors deposited the pledges in the bungalow. Ambau, considerably cowed, was released, and another little war was averted.

One evening I took my gun across the river to look for pigeons. In the course of my wandering I came to a small clearing in the jungle--a tiny wattle and thatched hut in a diminutive vegetable garden. An elderly Chinese man came out, "Good evening, your Worship," he remarked. I was so surprised I could scarcely find words to reply. Further conversation, in excellent English, elicited the information that he had been body-servant to an army officer, and had resided some years in Wimbledon. The transition from a London suburb to a lonely patch in the Bornean forest seemed so incongruous that I marvelled within myself. However, from the way in which he reiterated, "Your Worship," I have an inkling he must have been on close speaking terms with a Magistrate's Bench.

It was not always pleasant sailing across Tatau bar. Once we came down river to find a strong wind blowing from the sea and the shoal an ominous line of white. We lay to that night, but in the morning things were not much better--black clouds and grey sea. Ahmat, my policeman helmsman, a born sailor like all the Bintulus, asked what we should do. He thought the weather might get worse, and there was just a chance of crossing the bar at high water. I was not a bit anxious to be cooped up in the Tatau, although I hated the look of the curling waves. Ahmat decided to go out; he was always at his best where there was a spice of danger. The prisoner crew manned their sweeps, and off we went, bobbing and dipping in a nasty swell.

As we neared the bar I thought it impossible to surmount that wall of surf. Then we were in the surging foam. Ahmat stood at the tiller, tense, urging the rowers, shouting the time of each stroke. The muscles on the prisoners' arms seemed strained to breaking point; their breath came in short gasps. I felt the bow snatch round and a hideous wave obliterated the crew. One man floundered on to me where I crouched; the rest, thank God, held their own. The boat rose; I shut my eyes for the next blow, but Ahmat was ready, "Lagi! lagi, hantam, sama sama!" "Again!" he cried, "all out, all together!" Twice more we shipped ugly seas, and then, almost suddenly, we were over the boiling water, riding lightly in a smooth swell. Shipping their oars, the crew knelt on the deck and chanted their gratitude to Allah. With all my heart I joined them too.

The sea is a hard, fickle mistress. A strange bedraggled craft anchored off the fort one night. She was a small fishing

boat from the Natuna Islandsr Caught in a squall, her sail was blown to rags. She had been driven here and there about the sea for twenty-three days. The four Malays on board, who had barely subsisted on wet rice and rain water, borrowed a sail, took on fresh water and food, and sailed away next day in the teeth of another gale.

Those fearless men were true to the brine.

CHAPTER XVII

My greatest delight at Bintulu was my pack of hunting dogs. The origin of it all was an overgrown terrier bitch, named Limbang, with some English blood in her. Her progeny were of various kinds and colors, prick-eared and foxey-muzzled, but the little strain of fox-terrier made them somewhat superior to the ordinary run of native pariah. The pack numbered six couples and never have I struck a better lot for noses, intelligence, endurance or fearlessness. Scarcely one of the bunch but had the scars of a boar's tusk. Limbang's body was criss-crossed like the face of a German student and she was blind in one eye, the result of an encounter with a snake who had spat at her.

Pack-law was strictly observed. Every evening twelve platters were laid out heaped with rice, scraps, and, when there was a kill, pigmeat. Each dog took up position by his particular portion; but not a morsel was touched until Limbang had gone the round and extracted any tidbit she specially fancied. Once I saw a young dog wolf eat a piece of meat before Limbang had finished her inspection; she flew at him until he howled for mercy; he never did it again. The dogs never came up into my quarters; only Limbang was privileged to lie on the top stair where she waited at tea-time for a piece of cake. The pack roamed in the fort compound night and day, and if any dog from the kampong wandered in we had to bury its body.

At one time I thought it would be nice to give them a kennel to sleep in, so I had a hut built with a run surrounded by a six-foot plank wall. The first night the whole pack howled hideously. The second night there was silence, but what was my surprise in the early morning to find the dogs roaming in the garden as usual. I took particular care to lock the kennel door and keep the key that night. In the morning all the pack was out again. Once more I locked them up, but after dark I crept out and hid behind the palisade, peering through a crack. I saw Limbang retire to a far corner of the run, take a sprint, leap up the wall until she hung from the top and pull herself over. The rest followed one by one in strict order of precedence and that was the end of my kennel scheme.

The Dyaks in the fort guard loved the dogs and twice a week took them out hunting; it was rarely they came back without the carcass of a pig or deer. I could get away Sundays and we would start off in the early morning when the air was fresh and the sun pale through the haze.

Let us have a day with the Bintulu hunta

As soon as I emerge armed with a Snider carbine, borrowed from the fort armory, the dogs know at once what is required of them; they dance round me with yaps of joy, eager to get off. Half-a-dozen Rangers join up, with Dyak "parang" at their waists and carrying long spears. At their head Private Jelliboh, self-appointed kennel-huntsman to the Bintulu pack, shikari and jolly good sort.

Along the beach we go for a mile or two, until we reach the mouth of a small stream trickling in many forked channels through the sand. At this point we strike into the jungle, and immediately the dogs are all alert. Here and there they scatter through the undergrowth, sterns erect, noses to the ground. A young dog speaks, but the others merely look up and settle down again to the draw. They know perfectly well that Blangkas has only viewed a chattering monkey in a treetop. Soon there is a babel on our right that thrills us, but still Limbang is not much interested. Running to the spot we find half the pack grouped round a hole at the base of a tree.

"An iguana, bolted to earth," says a Dyak scornfully, and we pass on.

It is thick shade in the jungle, but as we push through the tangled bushes, climb up short hills or slip down rocky ravines, the sweat soaks through my khaki jacket.

We are wading along the pebble bed of a stream when we are called to a halt by a dog's whimper; we hold our breaths in expectancy; another, and another, join in and soon the whole pack is in melodious cry. "Babi! Pig!" shouts Jelliboh. Off we go running, stumbling, forcing a way through a network of entwined creepers, torn by thorn bushes, slithering on mud, crawling up rocky ledges, trying to keep in sound of the hunt. A crashing through the undergrowth takes our attention; there is a glimpse through the trees of a dark form, a sow alarmed by our approach. I take a snapshot; the crack reverberates through the jungle. No good, I am too late; the old lady pounds away into the gloom. We can just hear the dogs in the distance; they are running left. "To Sungei Pelahan," calls Jelliboh, knowing full well that hunted pig makes for the nearest water.

The Dyaks speed off, threading their way with all the instinct of wild animals. I follow more ponderously. The heat is intense; what would I give for some iced beer! It seems the hunt is coming more my way. Panting with exertion, cursing as I trip over half-sunken roots or stones, I reach a stream. The chorus has died down; ahead I can hear vicious yelps and snarls. The stream bends, I strike it again a little farther on.

There in a pool, his back to a rock, is our pig at bay, shaking himself in spasmodic jerks to free himself of the dogs who hang on to his legs, his flank, his neck, anywhere where they can get a grip on loose skin. The Dyaks run up. One poises his spear; a sharp thrust through the shoulder and the boar sinks into the reddened water.

Midday; we open our palm leaf packages; sandwiches for me, boiled rice with salt for the Dyaks, and a drink of cool water from the stream. A cigarette while we go over all the incidents of the run and it is time to move on. The carcass of the pig is slung on a pole and two of the men shoulder it to a spot where we can pick it up on our return.

We are not quite so active now as in the morning; we slant towards the shore. We covered a lot of ground in that last run and it is some time before we can hear the rumble of sea on sand.

Ambling along, just when we least expect it, a pig jumps up in front, crashing away seawards with the noise of an elephant. The dogs are after it like a shot; we follow, all weariness forgotten. When the hunted animal reaches the jungle's edge he turns right to the pack in hot pursuit. We find running easier along the sand. Away in the denser forest we hear the sound of the hunt getting fainter and fainter. It is useless now to go further so we rest rather disconsolately on a drift-log. Jelliboh listens intently all the while. Presently his face beams. "They are coming back," he proclaims, and true enough we can hear the dogs more distinctly every moment. "Aram! Come along!" he cries, and we double off along the shore. Nearer and nearer come the sounds until they are close to the fringe of the jungle. Jelliboh puts a restraining hand on my arm. A large pig bursts into the open and lollops towards the sea. "Shoot!" whispers Jelliboh. I fire, and "porcus" crumples onto the sand.

It is late afternoon; we leave the second pig to be fetched by boat and after collecting the dogs trudge homewards in the glow of the setting sun, tired but full of the satisfaction that comes of a good day's hunting with a keen pack and followers who are sportsmen every one of them.

Private Jelliboh had served under me in the guard at Limbango. Lanky and lithe, he was somewhat tall for a Dyak; sharp-featured, sharp-eyed, with sunken cheeks, his type reminded me of a North American Indian. He used to attach himself to me when I went pig shooting at night. We never had much success because pigs were scarce at Limbang.

On one occasion, it was bright moonlight, we were returning through a field of waist-high scrub when we heard something.

moving about seventy yards off. We waited crouching, and, distinctly heard a grunt. Jelliboh whispered that it was a pig grubbing for roots. Presently, among the shaking bushes, I could just discern a greyish patch. "Try a shot," murmured Jelliboh, so I took a snap at what I guessed might be the body. After the echo of the crack had died away there was a momentary dead silence, and then to our horror a ghostly human form rose from the undergrowth and staggered towards us with outstretched arms. We ran to meet it. It was a Chinese man with blood streaming down his face. I shall never forget the anguish I felt. Supporting him on either side, we half carried him to his lonely shack some way off. There we bathed his face; my bullet had nicked a neat little dent in the bridge of his nose. Another half-inch it would have been murder. He said his name was Ah Sam that he had suffered terribly from indigestion. The Chinese doctor had told him to go out at midnight at the time of full moon and search for certain medicinal roots. We had caught him at it and the pig noises we heard were caused by his refractory tummy. Jelliboh gave him a good dressing down for wandering about in the middle of the night; I gave him ten dollars and the wound soon healed.

Two months later I was hurriedly sent for to see a man who was nearly dead after swallowing a quantity of opium. I found my friend Ah Sam laid out quite rigid, unconscious, but still breathing. Emetics such as mustard, salt and so on had failed so I forced my finger rather roughly down his throat. It did the trick. Up came the opium and Ah Sam recovered. He got into trouble, though, over this escapade. In Court he explained that a Chinese shopkeeper owed him money. This gentleman did a bolt one fine morning leaving a wife to look after his affairs. Ah Sam in a fit of fury took the most poignant revenge he could think of; he determined to commit suicide on his debtor's doorstep so that his spirit should forever haunt the defaulter. Ah Sam did a short term of imprisonment and then worked for me very ably as my water-carrier. As far as I know he lived happily ever afterwards.

Another night at Bintulu I took my rifle along the sands. In the distance I spotted what looked like a buffalo standing at the edge of the sea. Cautiously I stalked it until I was able to take cover within range, behind a clump of "nipa" washed up by the tide. The beast was the biggest boar I had seen. He slowly came towards me and passed quite close. It was a point-blank shot, but the animal never noticed anything, never looked to right or left, never faltered in his sedate stride as he disappeared into the jungle. I could not even see a tell-tale drop of blood. I was so amazed I could only gaze blandly and think of the "Ghost Pigs" that natives tell of. Early next morning I took the dogs to the spot. They hit the line at once and fifty yards in the jungle lay the pig shot clean through

the heart. He weighed over two piculs (270 lbs.). I can only imagine that death must have been instantaneous and automatic action kept him moving.

There was more game such as pig or deer in the Bintulu than any other district I went to. Pig were in numbers round the coast because the Mohammedans left them alone and there were few Dyaks to hunt them. My pack accounted for 98 head in one year.

Up-river near Tubau where there was a solitary blockhouse that I periodically visited, deer abounded because the Kayans round about refused to kill them. The particular tribe that inhabited that region rather skeptically maintained that the souls of their ancestors were reincarnated in deer, therefore it was bad joss for them to kill the animal. They bore no malice, however, to anyone else for killing deer or eating the flesh. On one occasion, though, some Malays with me borrowed a Kayan boat and offended all the canons of Kayan decency by bringing back the dead carcass of a deer in it. Some Dyaks refuse to kill, or even hurt the feelings of a crocodile by abusing it, for the same reason; although if a crocodile should kill a human being they would have no compunction in retaliating on the beast.

One never failing joy was to spend a few days at Kidurong Point. At the extreme end was a ramshackle bungalow open to the sea breezes. When the weather was rough, the rollers thundered on the rocks and spray flew up to the veranda. At night the beam from the lighthouse shot across the water. I would fish with an improvised rod and line and caught the most lovely rock fish, some royal blue and black, others of a gorgeous orange hue. I could bathe in a natural swimming bath fringed with rocks. It was well to keep a wary eye open, for the nearby streams of Pelahan and Sebatang were infested with crocodiles. Sometimes I saw the smoky smudge of a steamer on the horizon; it made me feel like a shipwrecked person stranded on a lonely island waiting for the ship that never came. It is strange how frightfully homesick one can get at times.

I shall never forget Christmas, 1908. It was the zenith of the wild monsoon; weather was horribly rough, but I went to Kidurong full of expectancy for my mails and the delicacies I had ordered for the occasion. The old paddle steamer "Adeh" loomed into sight on the 23rd making heavy weather. She anchored in the shelter of the bay, disembarked a few passengers, and sailed away into the haze. There were no mail bags, no packages. How my heart sank, and a bitter feeling seized me that I should have been forgotten, left out at the one time of year when kind thoughts are most looked for. My mail arrived with the New Year, but I think that was the most miserable Christmas I ever spent, solitary, and without a word of cheer from anyone.

It was at Kidurong in April, 1869, that occurred the final encounter with Lanun pirates in Sarawak waters. Three large boats of these ruffians from North Borneo under the leadership of Datu Tumbok swept down the coast pirating many small craft; among their captives being a Bintulu woman named Sinip and her little son. The Lanun galleys anchored in Kidurong Bay, whereupon the Resident of Bintulu, Alfred Houghton, decided to attack them. The fleet of fishing "barongs" was led by Pangiran Buntar, the native chief. The encounter started with a drawn-out bombardment from brass swivel gunst. Eventually the Lanun ammunition gave out and the Bintulu boats closed in and boarded the pirate craft. The Lanuns attempted to escape by jumping into the sea; but their fate was soon settled; everyone was killed. The woman Sinip was found dead; but her son Tuak I often saw in Bintulu. At Fort Keppel there was preserved an interesting letter from the Rajah thanking the Bintulu people for their successful action on this occasion.

I wrote an account of this almost forgotten affray and it drew forth a letter of reminiscences from Major Rodway; who was at Mukah at the time. Major Rodway joined the Sarawak service in 1862, he retired in 1883; and when he died in 1924 had drawn a pension for forty yearst.

I was pursuing a calm; unruffled existence when, one evening in April; Reggie Douglas suddenly arrived from Baram in a launch. I was overjoyed to see him. I had not met a white man for months. Almost his first words weret; "Congratulations on your promotion." Seeing my bewildered look; he explained that I was gazetted Resident of Simanggang. There had been no mail and I had heard nothing about it. When I realized he was not pulling my leg, it fairly took my breath away. The 2nd Division was a mighty lift from little out-of-the-way Bintulu. I learned that my old chieft; Bailey, had died in England while on sick leave and that a good deal of trouble had been brewing among the Batang Lupar Dyakst.

Douglas and I sat up talking all that night; fortifying ourselves with tankards of beer and lusty slices of ham until he sailed away on the early morning tidet.

Two days later the mail arrived with the official notice of my appointment. There were also two letters from the Rajah; one gave me instructions about affairs in Simanggang; the other gave me a rating for not appearing in Kuching sooner to take up my new office. He had forgotten I was detached from everythingt.

The "Adeh" was waiting in the river; there was no one to relieve me; but I gathered together all the baggage I could at short notice and sailed for Kuching the next morning, having already been Resident of the 2nd Division for a month without knowing itt.

As we sheered off, my dogs assembled on the wharf and howled until I nearly cried. It was the end of our happy hunting. I stood at the stern and watched Arcadian Bintulu face from sight with a lump in my throat.

At Kuching, I heard that Bailey was a sick man when he went on leaver. There is no doubt the strain of the troubles in the Batang Lupar had told on him. I am glad that his end came in England and he could rest at Ightham among his ancestors, the yeomen of Kent he was so proud of.

CHAPTER XVIII

I reached my new district the middle of May, 1909, and landed ceremoniously at Simanggang. All the three junior officers were there O. Lang, the Assistant Resident, and Cadets Aplin and Skrine; there was also a guard of honor and a group of well-known faces. The Rajah had given me a Commission to be read out in open Court. This was done before a gathering of the principal Malays and Chinese and the Dyak Penghulus, and I rattled off the usual few words of comfort asking their co-operation in maintaining the loyalty and welfare of the division. We all shook hands and beamed at each other.

There was very little change in Simanggang since I had left the station eight years before. Several of my old friends were still there but I missed Tuanku Putra and Police Sergeant Bakir, who had taken such pains to train my footsteps in the early days. Abang Haji Tamin was now chief Native Officer; Abang Abdulrashid, commonly known as Dul, young, zealous and intellectual, was a new member of the staff, as also was Tuanku Drahman. The latter was a Malay of the old school, with grey hair, a ragged grey moustache and twinkling eyes behind large round spectacles. He would sit for hours with folded hands and bowed head, his lovable disposition ever showing itself in a suggested compromise between disputants or a soothing word to cool heated feelings.

Although the Batang Lupar country appeared little changed outwardly, it had really passed through fiery times.

When I was last at Simanggang there had been peace among the Ulu Ai Dyaks for over three years, ever since the great aggressor, Bantin, had lost his son in a skirmish with government forces in 1897.

Trouble actually started with a fracas between Dyaks over the Netherlands India frontier, and some Kenyahs, also in Dutch territory, who had killed three Dyaks, gutta hunters, trespassing in their country. This was in November, 1901. The Ulu Ai, always ago for any excuse to enhance their reputation as head hunters, immediately formed bands of young bloods to assist their allies on the frontier in wreaking vengeance. The movement was nipped in the bud by the Dutch authorities, but the Ulu Ai lust for head-taking was again aroused after a quiescent period.

There were about four thousand Dyak families living in the Ulu Ai, holding themselves aloof from the loyal Dyaks living

below the fort at Lubok Antu and in most cases embittered against them by reason of age-old feuds. The younger Ulu Ai were longing to show off their manliness and, as is always the case, the young women egged them on. They were only waiting their opportunity and fate brought it.

Bujal, a Netherlands India Dyak, was inadvertently killed in the Sermat, a tributary of the Batang Lupar, below Lubok Antu station. The authors of this unfortunate affair were brought to trial at Simanggang, sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, and reparation, known as "peti nyawa," was paid to Bujal's relatives. The affair was settled according to Dyak custom and no further trouble anticipated.

In March, 1902, a force of Ulu Ai under the leadership of the old rascal Bantin swept down on Sermat, killing three innocent Dyaks. In May this was followed up by another raid upon inoffensive people below Lubok Antu.

The Rajah took steps and fitted out a punitive expedition of 12,000 loyal Dyaks under the command of the Rajah Muda, Mr. Deshon, and other officers, which started up-river in June. As ill-luck would have it, cholera broke out and decimated the force. A thousand deaths occurred in the first few days. The main body fled from the disease and, before a week was up, only four hundred men remained. Little could be done, but before the expedition returned a few enemy houses were burned.

Naturally the Ulu Ai felt that the gods were on the side of their lawlessness.

In September, Bantin attacked the Lemanak people, killing seventy-two. On this occasion he was joined by Ngumbang†, a notable chief and ex-government official. Kana, another fire-brand from the Engkari river, followed this up with a looting raid.

The government had to do something to protect its people.

Two expeditions, in October and November, attacked the Engkari and Betong Wi, the latter being the site of Ngumbang's own home. The enemy kept out of range but several of their houses were razed to the ground.

During 1903, the game was kept going. The whole of the Ulu Ai, the inaccessible Dyaks on both sides of the frontier range of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo, the warriors in the head-waters of the Batang Lupar and the Rejang, had got the mania for head hunting very badly.

Bailey was not given to temporizing with the rebels, as he called them. Salt is a vital necessity for all natives. Bailey

stopped all supplies going up-river, forcing the recalcitrants to make long journeys into Dutch territory with the hope of smuggling the condiment over the frontier. It was certainly an effective blockade and might have brought the Ulu Ai to heel but Bailey refused to negotiate with rebels. He insisted they must unconditionally accept his terms which were, in the first place, to leave their fastnesses and virgin paddy lands in the hills and move to the banks of the main river, where the Ulu Ai contended they would die of starvation owing to the poor quality of the land. The Ulu Ai preferred to continue head hunting, hiding in the highlands with good crops and no salt, to a precarious, humdrum life with unlimited supplies nearby at Lubok Antua.

The Rajah himself, at the age of seventy-four, led an expedition in March, 1903, when the force proceeded to Jingin and engaged the enemy at Bukit Seligi. This was the last occasion the Rajah personally conducted military operations.

After this affair Ngumbang and Bantin fancied they could make a conditional surrender to the Rajah, but Bailey determined to ensure a lasting peace, was adamant about terms, and this rather stubborn attitude started the ball rolling again.

In April, Kana raided the Entabai in the Rejang killing twenty-three. In October, they turned their attention to the Merakai in Dutch territory. In December, in conjunction with sundry "Orang Kampar"--wandering ne'er-do-wells from over the border--the rebels attacked loyal Dyaks in the Lemanak, taking twenty-two heads. As Bailey wrote, "These Orang Kampar Dyaks from outside are the curse of the Ulu Ai. They have nothing to lose except their lives and they do not mind risking them when they are mischief making in some country that is not theirs, for they trust to their speed and knowledge of the jungle to save them."

The government took action again in June, 1904. Baring-Gould had a sharp skirmish with Ngumbang's and Bantin's followers on Kedang Hill. H. L. Owen took another column into Kana's country, the Engkari, and inflicted a lot of damage to enemy property without coming to blows with the rebels, who, following their usual tactics, hung around, but avoided getting into harm's way. Altogether the force was in the enemy country for three weeks, much hampered by the low state of the river which caused many boats to be holed on the rocks and the loss of a considerable quantity of ammunition.

Bailey went home on leave soon after this expedition and Kana with his father, Apai Laja, hereditary chief of the Engkari, tendered their submission to the government. The Engkaris now stepped out of the picture, but Ngumbang and Bantin made matters

lively with sporadic raids. On one occasion a party of bloods lodged with some inoffensive Punans in the Rejang headwaters. In the morning the Dyaks murdered them all, men and women indiscriminately, with revolting brutality. One girl clung to her lover of the previous night in the hope that he would spare her at least, but she was pushed off and struck down without mercy. The Resident of the Rejang rounded up this gang and the Dyaks were severely dealt with.

On another occasion, in April 1905, some Dyaks from Dutch territory fell upon the Ulu Skrang without warning and butchered thirty-four persons, mostly women and children, as they were walking unsuspectingly to their farms at break of day--men, women and children straggling confusedly along the narrow jungle path when the enemy attacked them. This raid was led by a refugee Dyak from Netherlands India named Apai Biti, whose sister was married to the arch rebel Ngumbang.

In June of the same year the Skrang Dyaks had a visit from Ngumbang and his warriors, but this time the marauders met their match and were repulsed after a fight that lasted seven hours. 1906 saw the Ulu Ais at the throats of their original foes, the Sermat Dyaks, and they collected seventeen heads on this raid.

Minor affairs occurred almost monthly. The whole interior was desperately unsettled and the Dyaks in the neighboring Rejang river got the infection badly.

However, in 1907, Bantin thought he had had enough of the fighting and might do better for himself along the paths of peace. He entered into negotiations, not with Bailey whom he hated, but with Charles Hose, the Resident of the Rejang. The Rajah was delighted and personally attended the peace-making ceremony at Kapit between Bantin's Ulu Ai Dyaks and the Rejang Dyaks who had been harassed a good deal by the rebels. A condition of the peace was, that it was to be confirmed at Lubok Antu in the presence of the Batang Lupar people.

So far so good, but when Bantin was asked to meet the Batang Lupar representatives, he had the cheek to say that the Rajah had authorized him to impose fines on all the loyal Dyaks for disturbing the peace of the country, presumably in resisting his murderous attacks. Such a preposterous demand could not be listened to, so the peace-making came to a full stop.

Some of the Skrangs fondly imagined that the Ulu Ai really did want to settle down, so when a party of twenty of them turned up at a house in upper Skrang for some fishing, they were offered hospitality and properly entertained. In the morning the Ulu Ais borrowed nets from their hosts, saw most of the men off to their farms and then massacred nine women and an old man.

This was followed by other small raids in various parts, in each one loyal Dyaks losing a head or two.

It must be understood that the Government was powerless to protect the whole district against these raids. It would have meant the permanent employment of a large army to police the many miles of affected country. Sarawak could only give swift hard blows when it was possible to collect a number of loyal Dyaks with the least inconvenience to the levies themselves. The enemy, operating in small mobile parties, hit here, there and everywhere, without warning, trusting to the speed and knowledge of the thousand devious tracks through thick jungle to get clear before reprisals could be instituted.

In August, 1908, the Rajah decided to strike a blow at Ngumbang's and Bantind's headquarters in the Delok, and also against the rebels in the Mikai Pambar country. Bailey and H. L. Owen were in command. The enemy, as usual, kept out of the way, but for eight days their country was in complete possession of the force, and in the opinion of those who had had a long experience of "ulu" troubles, the insurgents received the most smashing lesson they had had for twenty years. Altogether twenty-two strongholds were burned and huge stores of paddy, fowls, pigs, brassware and jars and household effects were destroyed. That expedition left the Ulu Ai stunned, so that quiet prevailed for quite a long time.

But another disturbance was brewing in the lower Batang Lupar.

Early in 1908, Bailey reported that a Malay called Pangiran Omar, residing at Balai Karangan on the Dutch frontier, not far from the Undup and Lingga, was selling charms and talismans--some designated as a cure for all illnesses, even blindness, others which guaranteed invulnerability to the wearers. Hundreds of Batang Lupar Dyaks, from the Undup, the main river, and the Lingga, flocked to visit the quack and exchange their brassware for the antidotes. Later it was heard that the swindler had stirred up Dyaks to ambush a party of Dutch native soldiers so effectively that they killed the European Commandant. Pangiran Omar bolted, but was eventually arrested and kept under close surveillance by the Dutch. The excitement died down, but Pangiran Omar's fame survived.

Half-civilized natives readily admit the benefit of an ordered rule under the white man; all the same, there is inevitably at the back of their minds an instinctive desire to be their own masters. They pass over the certainty of injustice, oppression and hardship under a native ruler and cling to the idea that with self-government they would be free to do anything they like. Most natives, especially Dyaks, will believe any

thing their own people tell them and the more improbable the yarn; the more voluble the speaker; the more credulous they become. When a European gives them the straightforward truth; they are suspicious at once; they ponder in their heads that there must be a catch somewhere for anyone to be so blatantly honest. A clever Asiatic can work miracles by dramatic utterances; a European is usually too prosaic to excite intelligence. It can thus be realized that the Dyak brain is fertile soil for a Malay swindler's chatter; particularly when it insidiously suggests that the white man's rule could be dispensed with.

The next incident in the Pangiran Omar affair was considerable unrest among the Undup Dyaks; the most loyal of all the Dyak tribes. There was an insistent rumor that the Pangiran had returned to his old haunt and Dyak emissaries informed the Undup Penghulu that he and his people were to offer sacrifices to the Malay as their "Petara Kling;" the God of War. Amongst other mandates from the new "god" was one prohibiting his followers from eating pumpkins and prawns.

As a matter of fact; Pangiran Omar was being watched by the Dutch; miles away from the frontier; but his mantle had fallen on other unscrupulous Malay traders who; using his name; assumed to themselves supernatural powers to work on the feelings of the superstitious Dyaks for their own ends. Two of these swindlers; Alim and Ali; were caught. Alim; a blind monstrosity, had been living among the Dyaks, at their expense, as a prince; representing himself to be a "god." Dyak maidens flocked to his harem and; when he went for a stroll; he trod on the prostrate bodies of his dupes, who considered it an honor to be so debased or even spat upon by the deity.

These two gentlemen came down to common earth in jail.

Towards the end of 1908; Pangiran Omar was resuscitated in the Sadong; a river contiguous to the Lingga. The Sadong and Simunjan Dyaks were called upon; and started; to make a broad highway to Balai Karangan along which Pangiran Omar could march his forces to attack the government station in the district. The penalty for not carrying this out was a blighting curse on their houses and farms.

Who originated this scheme was never known; Pangiran Omar himself was nowhere near Balai Karangan.

The Rajah sent some Rangers who soon brought the Sadong people back to their senses; the excitement died out after the headmen had paid up fines for their stupidity.

Bailey went home in September; never to return; broken up with the cares and anxieties of the last few years.

H. L. Owen took over charge of the 2nd Division. He was the ideal man for a Dyak district. He understood their ways and customs, and spoke the language so fluently that he could pass himself off as one of them. In addition, H. L. Owen's devil-may-care daring and ready tact in dealing with obstreperous characters made him a popular person with all natives. Under his influence the unrest in the Ulu Ai began to flag.

In March, 1909, Owen learned that Dyaks from the Lingga had visited Balai Karangan with the object of starting the Pangiran Omar craze afresh. Masir, the prime mover, was sent for, but replied with a message of unmistakable defiance. At the same time, Dyaks in the Skrang and Undup began to hold feasts in honor of the restitution of a new "petara" (god). Owen saw at once that immediate action was necessary. He scratched together a party of eleven Sarawak Rangers, about a dozen Malays and a few Balau Dyaks, and started up the Lingga for Masir's house. The following day the little force marched inland.

Owen was ahead with Abang Dul when they were ambushed. A Dyak wearing Pangiran Omar's charms for invulnerability rushed pell-mell at Owen and flung his spear, which struck quivering in the earth at H.L.O.'s feet. Owen shot the madman with his revolver. At the same time the party was attacked. The Balau Dyaks, more than half believing in the invulnerability of the enemy, all ran away. The Malays puckerily stood their ground and eventually beat off the attackers, who retreated leaving four dead. Owen had proved to the Dyak world that their deity was not to be depended on.

Subsequently, Rangers were marched through the disaffected region, penalties exacted and quiet soon restored. But it was not until afterwards, when I met headmen from all over the Dyak country, that I realized how much hinged on that ambush. Had the government party been overpowered, every Dyak would have believed in the efficacy of Pangiran Omar's spells and the government would have had a difficult task in dealing with the situation.

The Rajah, I think unjustly, determined that Owen might prove too hot-headed to be safe at Simanggang, so it was with very mixed feelings that I found myself pitchforked from my tranquil Bintulu into the hurly-burly of Dyak problems.

CHAPTER XIX

My first introduction to the Ulu Ai rebels was a visit from Kana, the swash-buckler from the Engkari, who was responsible for many a massacre.

There was an understood truce with the Ulu Ai or I should have been sorely tempted to have laid the fellow by the heels straight away. Nevertheless I could not help admiring his pluck in bearding me in my own den.

It was a Sunday afternoon; as he came up to the office door I heard an altercation, and then Kana stalked in with the swaggering stride of a man confident in his own power.

He was slim and straight, all wiry muscle; his sharp, chiseled face was scarred by a wound that ribbed his brown cheek; his restless eyes were crafty. He had donned full war paint, a bearskin warcoat on his shoulders, a warcap flaunting hornbill's feathers fitted tightly on his long black hair. I noticed with some relief he was minus his sword; the removal of that had evidently caused the disturbance outside.

For nearly three hours Kana put forward the claims of the Ulu Ai, seeking to trap me into some concession that would benefit them. My sole object was to convince him of the madness of defying the great White Rajah when all the advantages of peace were open to them. We did not get very far; neither he nor I were giving anything away; it seemed we might go on shouting at each other till Doomsday, so heavy-hearted I brought the negotiations to a close. We shook hands and Kana departed. Afterwards I heard that two native officers, Abang Dul and Abang Abuassan, had stood on guard outside the office door all the time; they waylaid the chief when he came out and rubbed in the government point of view again. However, Kana and his boat crew in full war regalia paddled away home breathing vengeance, and I felt what it is like to stand on the brink of a volcano. I determined in my turn to meet the rebellious chiefs on their own ground and arranged a conference at Lubok Antu.

It was an interesting gathering. Bantin, the chief leader, was there; so was Ngumbang, Apai Laja, Kana, Langgong and others.

I met them in the Court Room. Bantin was the quietest of the lot; Kana and Ngumbang did all the talking. They were decidedly truculent, especially when I told them there was no

chance of any abatement in the original peace terms. They were to deposit much brassware and many old jars with the government as pledges of their good faith, and they were given a fixed time to remove their houses from inaccessible heights inland to sites on the river which would bring them within easy reach.

Speech followed speech, and as they opposed every attempt at settlement their tempers rose at each oration. They chewed their betel nut with vindictive gusto and spat freely on the polished floor. I knew if it went on like this no diplomacy of mine could avert trouble; they were so worked up. I looked wearily out of the window; the sun was bright, the river and hills were a picture. A picture! I had a brain-wave. Rising hurriedly as if perfectly indifferent to their fevered talk, I caught hold of old Ngumbang. "Come along all of you, I am going to take your photographs with the 'picture box.' " Smiles broke out at once, and Kana, with the more enlightened chiefs, began to preen themselves. Ngumbang and Bantin wanted assurances that no harm would be done them. They were like a lot of children; some of the followers egged them on, others told them to be careful. Eventually I got them all outside and ranged up, the conference totally forgotten in the excitement of the moment. Just as I clicked the shutter their pluck deserted them, and I have still a confused snapshot of Bantin, Apai Laja and other notorious warriors disappearing as fast as their legs could carry them round the corner of the fort, amid the jeers of their bodyguard.

Altogether, the meeting, thanks to the camera, was a success. Bold speech after that episode was definitely at a discount.

The same evening I held a cocktail party at which the Ulu Ai leaders drank much gin. Ngumbang put his arm round my shoulder and said, so that all could hear: "Tuan, never mind our big talk, our tongues are long, but our hearts are true; we would be friends with the 'prentah' (government)." The rest grunted their approval, so, after all, peace reigned in the Ulu Air.

It was more than that. The Dyaks kept to their word; bit by bit pledges of brassware and jars were brought to the fort as a proof that they had had enough of fighting.

There was no warfare now to engross the attention of the 2nd Division, so the Dyaks fell back on the next best excitement, and interested themselves in endless litigation. Cases concerning farming land occupied most of our time. Paddy being the staple means of livelihood to the average Dyak, it is natural that land property should represent a good deal of his wealth, and that the matter of a few fathoms, more or less, should be worth squabbling about.

The system of land tenure amongst Dyaks then recognized in Sarawak was that theoretically all land, whether jungle or cleared for paddy farming, was the property of the State. Practically, the mere act of clearing a portion of virgin jungle conferred on the laborer a restricted right of proprietorship, and once this land had been farmed it was considered as reserved for the use of the original worker, his heirs and descendants. The State did not countenance the sale of land held for paddy farming, and any transfer required the permission of a magistrate. As some land, the hill land, was only farmed once in, say, ten years, the boundaries got confused, and as old sketch maps, innocent of any accurate survey, were often misleading, it was easy for land cases to become very intricate, in fact a match for those who were known to be the best prevaricators on each side.

I see I reported about this time that, "Court work has been constant and cases noteworthy for giving the most trouble are those in connection with Dyak farming land. Several attempts have been made to re-open cases settled years ago; the litigants fondly imagining that with a new staff no evidence would remain of the earlier settlements. It is extraordinary how demoralized a Dyak can become over the question of a small plot of farming land; the most unscrupulous methods are made use of to gain his ends, and what is worse, I understand partisans and relations even gamble on the results."

The Rajah always retained special control over the affairs of the 2nd Division and liked an opportunity to assert his authority. The Dyaks knew it also, and used to rush down to Kuching for a decision that could not be overthrown.

On one occasion a well-known Dyak litigant came up to me with a smirk on his face, and produced a letter from the Rajah to the effect that he was personally acquainted with so-and-sots father and grandfather, and was perfectly sure the land he was claiming was rightly his; would I kindly see that he had it. Two days later the opposing party arrived from Kuching with a similar smirk and an identical letter. Secretly delighted, I referred the two missives to the Rajah again, who replied rather testily, "Do what you like with them." I settled the land question and then had the supreme pleasure of fining both parties for taking an undue advantage of His Highness.

Not all the Court work concerned land; everything was grist to the mill. I remember a Saribas Dyak named Bakak, who sold some torn and dirty pages from the Koran to Dyaks as a charm bestowing Herculean strength. One young man, having invested \$5, proceeded to give an exhibition to his awed relations. He decided to lift and carry about a fallen giant of the forest. When the attempt failed he came whining to the fort and Bakak paid the penalty.

Bakak really was a bit of a character. At one time he visited the Malay States, but getting into low water, he donned robes and a turban, called himself Hadji Bakar, and aped the devout to such good effect that he was appointed "belal" or caretaker of the local mosque.

Bakak's wits were never idle and he grew rich on them. Some years after our first introduction, I passed a house built bungalow style on the banks of the Paku, and was told that Bakak lived there à l'Européenne with a "boy" to serve his meals. When he got tired of that, he embarked on a small covered-in sampan and drifted up and down with the tide for days on end. His eccentricities earned him the reputation of being a wise man, and natives came from long distances to ask his advice, at a price.

Talking of strange characters reminds me of Jamah. She was a wild mad woman who roamed through all the Dyak country. A loathsome looking hag with long tousled hair and a skin like worn leather, clad in nothing but a tiny kirtle, she would appear at Simanggang, the butt of all the children who flung stones and dirt at her to make her caper and shriek like a demented ape. A day or two later we would hear she was at the other end of the Division. How she crossed the wide rivers was a mystery no one could explain. Natives said the crocodiles had pity on her and ferried her across on their backs. What she lived on no one knew. Natives said the pigeons brought her fruit, the herons found her fish. Dyaks with kindness roused by her affliction tried to keep her in their houses, put out food for her to eat; but she invariably broke away to live her life in the jungle, or near the streams, where even the wild animals and crocodiles showed her deference. Then one morning a heap of garbage was found in the boatshed at Simanggang and Jamah had at last found rest.

This is the story of Jamah as told me by the Dyaks. She was the belle of her village at the foot of Banting hill. Sought after by many suitors she gave her love to a gay upstanding "brave" of the Balau tribe. The marriage was celebrated in great style at his home, and after the feast, according to custom, the lovers paddled off together to Jamah's house. On the way they encountered a crocodile floating on the surface of the river. Jamah, full of merriment, laughed at its leering eyes and wrinkled head and, taking up her paddle, splashed water at its face.

"Ha, old man!" she cried, "Go away! I have my husband here. It is no good now making eyes of love at me." The crocodile, stung to fury, turned on the boat and dragged off the young man before his bride's eyes. Jamah paddled back alone to her home, a mad woman.

Insanity is not common among Dyaks. Occasionally one has heard of cases, but, as a rule, anyone so affected was kept in the house out of sight, the responsibility of his relatives. I never heard that Dyaks considered a madman a supernatural being, as is the case with most savage people; in fact, they looked upon anyone not quite normal as an encumbrance, though I am sure such unfortunates were never ill-treated.

It has often been noted that the moon influences mentality. We had a Dyak youth in prison for a minor offense who had curious phases every time the moon was at the full. One month he was a monkey vainly trying to scale the walls of his cell, gibbering, grimacing and scratching himself to the manner born. Another time he was a clucking hen sitting on a lay of eggs, pecking the food strewn on the floor. The spasms lasted four or five days, after which he was quite normal with no recollection of his weird behavior. When at home, his relations told me, he disappeared into the jungle as the moon reached its zenith, to reappear after the lapse of a few days absolutely sane.

An albino Dyak with whitish skin and hair and pink watery eyes, who used to frequent the Court at Simanggang, was a nasty sight, but contrary to what might be expected, the Dyaks never regarded him as anything different to themselves. This was not so in their respect for a "Manang Bali." These wretches have risen to the highest rank a "manang," or medicine man, can attain. They are men who have changed their sex. They ape the manners and garb of women, do all the work usually done by women; sometimes they even take a "husband." They are rarely met with, and I imagine may be hermaphrodites.

One of these creatures sat itself on the form in front of me in Court one day, dressed in a girl's full gala costume--a short embroidered skirt, a brass corset, bangles halfway up the arms, and sweet-smelling flowers in the hair. "It" petitioned for restitution of conjugal rights as its "husband" had run away. I should have liked to have said what was in my thoughts, but restrained myself and merely refused to do anything. The hypocrite squeezed out a crocodile tear and was led away by attendant damsels mopping its eyes with a pink silk handkerchief.

* * * * *

In order to bring our new friends the Ulu Ai into closer contact with the down-river Dyaks, we arranged to have some sports on New Year's Day. The idea was enthusiastically received.

Kana, the erstwhile rebel and murderer, had taken a great fancy to me and was constantly in Simanggang following me about like a pet dog.

On Christmas morning it was the custom of the officers to attend the service at the Mission Church at Sabuo. It was a three-mile walk through the jungle. We had got halfway when Kana came pattering after us and showed such interest in our proceedings that I had to let him come along. We went into church, Kana followed, and all through the service, which was in Dyak, he was a pattern of decorum, kneeling, sitting and standing exactly as he saw me do, though he caused some distraction to the rest of the congregation, who could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the rebel leader, whose name was one to conjure fear with, genuflecting before a Christian altar.

Following matins was a communion service.

Afterwards Kana hurried to my side. "Who are you going to fight?" he whispered, his eyes glittering. I disavowed any such intentions.

"Then why drink blood?" he argued.

I am afraid the explanation was beyond my powers. I left him sorely puzzled.

New Year's Day dawned on one of the largest gatherings Simanggang had witnessed. From down-river, up-river and all streams, boatloads of gay Dyaks came in their hundreds.

To me, it was a real joy to see how all animosity seemed dead. The Ulu Ai, though holding themselves just a trifle aloof, were treated everywhere with astonishing good fellowship.

It must have been an eye-opener, too, for these men from the far wilds to see such a concourse all on pleasure bent. One Ulu Ai remarked to me: "Another time I shall bring my women," and a statement like that meant a lot in the cause of peace.

Races, sack races, three-legged races, greasy poles and jumping--all went with a swing. Then someone induced Kana to take part in a hurdle race. The crowd, vastly excited, surged round the course. Kana swaggered to the starting post full of determination to show the "ilir" Dyaks what the Ulu Ai could do. Off they went, and at the first hurdle down came Kana, sprawling in the dirt. Naturally the crowd laughed boisterously. I was struck glum when I saw Kana's face. He stalked off the field and I followed. He was furious. He maintained it was all a put-up job to bring ridicule on the Ulu Ai. He had suffered such shame, he was going straight back up-river and then the fools who had laughed at him had better beware.

All my good intentions seemed frustrated. I took him into the fort quarters; I plied him with gin so that his rancor dissolved, and that evening at a dance he took the floor and brought the house down. Truly I thought, "All's well that ends well."

CHAPTER XX

In a big district like the 2nd Division, one of the principal duties of a government officer was going the rounds. To visit the Saribas and Kalaka rivers, settling disputes as well as seeing that all was right, took the best part of a month. There was no traveling allowance for officers in those days, but there was wonderful keenness on the part of all to keep up the traditional efficiency of the district. I am told nowadays they have what is called a Traveling Officer who is solely qualified to go about the country and is alone privileged to see something of the natives in their own homes, while the rest of the staff apparently sit in their offices filling in the forms necessitated by "red tape" and annotating innumerable minute papers. If this is so, it is a great pity, because no officer can understand and sympathize with his native charges unless he can shed the official and mix with them at times in their natural life.

I was rarely at Simanggang for more than a month at a time and the junior officers were pretty generally on the move. It was not so very often that we were all able to foregather. When we did, we occasionally had a gala celebration which often took the form of a percussion band. The gramophone was started; the junior officer banged the wooden wall with his fists for big drum effect; Lang provided the triangle with a bunch of keys, while I improvised a kettle drum with a baccy tin and two old pipes. All very childish, but we showed considerable proficiency and were quite proud of our band.

We even danced sometimes, and invented steps that might well have been the envy of a "prima ballerina."

Some of you will say, "A real hectic 'binge,' I suppose," but it really was not so; it was just the effervescence of youth.

Three men cooped up in a fort soon got tired of reading the solid old works that mainly filled the shelves of Fort Alice library; conversation had its limits with no news of the outside world except at intervals of three weeks, "shop" was wisely barred after 8 p.m.; and three-cornered card games did not appeal; so having nothing better to do we reverted to the more primitive pastimes of music and dancing.

It seems to be the fashion among fiction writers to depict the white man in the East as a drunken sot with no morals.

I can definitely state that in sixteen years' outstation life I never came across an officer who had gone to the devil through drink, and if that was the case in the stations I served in, I have every reason to believe it was the same all over the country. To understand the ethics of sexual morality requires a finer perception than I possess. There is a broad and a narrow point of view. A philosopher has said very wisely that morality is not a religion; it is merely a custom. The code is elastic in accordance with its environment. Thus limitations customary in the West are apt to lose their significance in the East.

Is it really such a terrible sin if men shut away from the distractions of civilization for years fall to the charm of native women? There are women of the East who have as many graces as their white sisters, and they are brought up to consider the simple laws of nature of far more importance than the dictates of "Mrs Grundy."

It would be hypocritical to pretend that there was no mating of East and West in Sarawak, but such cases were never obtruded upon public notice; there was no bestiality. I go so far as to say that there was more decency in the wilds than can be met with in the streets of our cities, and a Dyak girl with naked breasts has purer instincts than most of the painted damsels with bare backs who crowd the night clubs of Europe.

Authors who can only see the nastiness in the East do an amount of harm. They can find it more prominent if they look nearer home.

Some men go out East and slide into a life that is far more luxurious than they could ever attain in England. For a man of weak nature, the climate, the mode of life, the very obsequiousness of the native all engender indolence. These are the men who "go under." They are few and far between. To keep fit and level-headed in the tropics it is necessary to limit self-indulgence and keep active; to this end there is nothing to beat systematic exercise such as walking, riding or games. Up-country it was not so easy to get cricket, football or even tennis, but as Simanggang there were ponies to ride and plenty of roads for walking on.

The cattle ground was an ideal place for golf, and we laid out an excellent nine-hole course. True, it was rough and would have caused the downfall of most experts; it was apt to be overgrown at times with "engkudok," a flowering shrub that sprang up in every clearing, but we kept a gang of prisoners at work pulling it up by the roots, and in the course of years it began to disappear. As far as exercise was concerned, I was somewhat fanatical. In the evenings I would walk out three or

four miles and run back, arriving at the fort in a glorious bath of perspiration. I was laughed at by the others and it may seem an idiotic thing to do on the equator. Natives, I am sure, thought I was mad. Once I remember coming round a corner full tilt on to a party of Dyaks wending their way home. They saw a wild-eyed disheveled white man tearing along the path. With one panic-stricken yell they flung their baskets and gear on the ground and leaped into the jungle. I have no doubt that when they got back to their village they had a big story of the evil spirit that had suddenly appeared and chased them. I attribute my good health out East to strenuous exercise, for I never suffered more than a day or two's illness in twenty-six years, barring an attack of appendicitis which might have happened to anyone.

Outside the ordinary routine of maintaining a government station in apple-pie order, dealing with correspondence and so forth, the principal duty of an outstation officer was the administration of justice. The Courts at this time had not been properly defined, so the harassed Resident was expected to do all the magisterial work from fining a coolie a dollar for brawling, to holding a murder trial. At Simanggang the Court sat every morning with orderly and dignified procedure, but in the sub-stations it became a promiscuous sort of affair. It often happened when traveling that cases were heard on the swaying verandah of a Dyak house, the magistrate squatting cross-legged on the floor, the Court Book balanced precariously on his knees; naked children, howling, crawled everywhere; pigs and fowls below added to the din.

Sometimes the officer sat in his boat with the flickering light of a hurricane lamp, listening to the arguments of litigants crouching before him, while witnesses yelled their evidence from the bank or stood knee-deep in the water alongside. Nevertheless, however or whatever place the Court was constituted, the decisions held good; the prestige of the white man was quite sufficient to ensure acceptance of his verdict.

They say there is a movement in Sarawak to clothe magistrates in wigs and black garments. They think it would enhance the dignity of the Courts. "O tempora!" "O mores!" How the merry Dyak maidens would chortle in delight to see the Tuan in horsehair locks!

The old regulations for Court's procedure, framed about 1870, laid down that murder cases must be tried before a mixed jury of twelve.

During my time at Simanggang I had to conduct two or three such trials; in each case the implicated parties were Chinese.

If Malays or Dyaks commit murder it is invariably "une affaire du coeur"--an unfaithful wife and a paramour--or it is the result of that hysterical condition known as "amok." In the former instance, native custom is very lenient to the murderer who generally gets off lightly owing to the provocation received. An "amok" usually gets killed himself before he can do all the damage he would like to; or if, by chance, he is captured alive, he is always certified insane; so members of these two races give little trouble to the Courts insofar as capital offenses are concerned.

It is a different story with a man of China; he would murder his best pal if he thought he was being done down for a dollar or two.

An affair that raised a good deal of interest in the district was the brutal murder of a Chinese man named Ah Siew and his wife in their hut among the pepper gardens of the Roban.

I took a lot of trouble over the matter.

The hut, a single roomed, wattle-walled shanty on the bank of the river, surrounded by pepper vines, was like a shambles inside, blood spattered everywhere. Despite all enquiries there seemed no motive or occasion for the outrager.

The victims were peaceful gardeners, against whom no one had a grudge.

Nothing was taken from the dwelling, and the people living near had heard nothing to arouse their suspicions. The only clue was the remains of the evening meal still left on a mat in the middle of the room. There were six used saucers, indicating the presence of four guests. Evidently the murder had occurred immediately after supper before there had been time to clear away, and as Chinese are regular in their meals, the time could be fairly accurately determined.

By dint of exhaustive enquiries I eventually discovered a Dyak woman who had met four Chinese boating upstream at a time that just fitted in.

Another Dyak testified to seeing the boat tied up that evening to the landing stage of the pepper garden.

The four Chinese, unemployed ne'er-do-wells, were traced and arrested on suspicion. In their hut a Chinese chopper with blood stains was found hidden in the thatched roof. The suspects said it was used for killing pigs. The "parang" was sent to Kuching for chemical tests. Unfortunately, research work had not developed then to the extent it has now. The medical

authorities would not take the responsibility of saying the stains were human blood. That was the first snag.

However, we went ahead with the trial.

I impaneled a jury of twelve men good and true, Chinese and Malays.

Under cross-examination the prisoners gave themselves away considerably.

It was obvious to me that these four Chinese must have at least been present at the time of the murder, though the evidence against them was, of course, purely circumstantial.

After a lengthy trial I summed up and left the fate of the accused to the jury.

They deliberated a long while, then re-entered the Court. Their verdict was "that as no one had seen the prisoners commit the murder, they could not find them guilty."

I felt inclined to ask the jury if it was usual for murderers to wait for an audience before starting their performance. Notwithstanding the verdict I did not release the men, but sent the records of the case to the Rajah as supreme judge. He decided that the gang should be sent to Kuching to serve a year's imprisonment and then be deported. The sentence may not have been in accordance with the canons of English law, but it satisfied everyone and emphasized the advantage of a personal despotism.

Some time afterwards the Malay foreman of the jury told me that the Malays were convinced of the prisoners' guilt, but the Chinese were afraid to do anything, so to save trouble they framed their remarkable verdict.

I never found the jury system to work well with Asiatics, and the present method of hearing capital charges with two assessors is much more satisfactory.

Years later I heard more of this murder case.

I had a visit from the Dyak chief of the Roban. The conversation turned on the subject.

"Oh!" said the Penghulu, "it is well known that the four Chinese killed Ah Siew and his wife. You see, Tuan, the gang were members of a Secret Society. They went to Ah Siew to induce him to join; he refused, so they cut him down. Ah Siew's wife ran to the door screaming for help and they killed her.

Ah San and his wife on the garden nearby heard it all but were afraid to speak. They feared reprisal. Some little while after the murder Ah San got drunk at a feast in my house and his tongue was loosened. Two days later when I wanted to hear more Ah San and his wife had run away in the night and I know not where they are. Still, Tuan, it was a good thing the Rajah sent those evil men out of the country."

It only shows how difficult it is to get to the bottom of crime when the inscrutable Celestial has a hand in it.

In my time I have had to sentence murderers to death, and also had the unpleasant duty of signing warrants for execution. People often ask me if I have not experienced a repulsion of feeling against such extreme penalty. I can say that I never blithely sent a man to his death, nor was I ever in doubt as to the justice of the sentence. In every case, the brutality of the deed, the revolting details, alienated any feelings of sympathy with the perpetrator. I have felt very much more for those officers whose duty it was to attend an execution.

In former days a malefactor was executed in Sarawak in the old Malay fashion by "krissing." The executioner stabbed a long thin-bladed dagger or "kris" through the left collarbone into the heart, causing instantaneous death.

The custom was abandoned when the limited number of executioners died out from want of practice.

In my day the extreme penalty of the law was administered by a firing squad of the Sarawak Rangers and I think that is as humane a method of dealing with out-and-out villains as can be devised.

I never heard of a Malay or Chinese man who met his end otherwise than calmly; in most cases smoking a cigarette up to the last moment. Asiatics as a rule have little fear of death. All races in Sarawak have a profound belief in a future existence, and death to them is simply a passing over to better conditions.

Dyaks have vague notions respecting the soul and its attributes. It is generally believed that the soul ("Samengat") passes after death to a region known as Sabayan, a country much the same as here on earth, only far more comfortable. In Sabayan paddy will grow at all times without special culture; it will harvest itself without manual labor. Game is plentiful everywhere and the pools are bursting with fish. There are numerous villages and fine rivers intersect the country.

Curiously enough the only people who do not enjoy all the good things of Sabayan are suicides. They are supposed to live in villages isolated from all other communities.

Suicide is not uncommon among Dyak women. Girls who are disappointed in love or whose honor has been assailed, often do away with themselves by drinking the juice of the "tuba" root, a poisonous shrub (derris elliptica).

I remember a case that left a deep impression on me. A young pretty girl was brought up charged with poisoning a youth and attempting suicide. Sitting alone on the prisoner's bench she told her story in a clear convincing manner.

Her name was Rimba and she loved a boy, Jimbun. He loved her too, but they were first cousins, and by Dyak custom that relationship comes within the prohibited degrees of matrimony.

By day they were careful not to excite attention. They went about their usual routine, Rimba fetching water from the river, pounding paddy, cooking the rice for the family meal; Jimbun felling the jungle for next year's paddy farm, or away with the young men snaring deer.

But after dark when Rimba was returning from her evening bath, Jimbun would be waiting at the side of the foot-beaten path to draw her gently into the bloom of the "babas," and there they guiltily, stealthily, renewed their vows. So it went on for weeks, for months, until love could be held in leash no longer. They would run away; so, hand in hand they stole forth one night. For miles they wandered, until worn out with the hopelessness of escape, they came to rest at the edge of a large paddy farm. Agonized by the knowledge that wherever they went discovery must follow; torn to misery that their love could never be abiding, Jimbun's eyes fell upon a patch of tuba plants. Here then was release. Let them go hand in hand to seek peace in Sabayan. Rimba, distracted with love, acquiesced. They grubbed up the poisonous roots; then pounded them until the milky juice filled a bamboo cup.

Lying in Rimba's arms, Jimbun took the first draught.

With love on his lips, she saw the first pangs of agony seize him, then the stupor, the stiffness, and death. Hastily Rimba drank the dregs.

"I woke," she said. "I was in a fair land with green meadows sloping to a broad river. Beyond it I could see noble jungle and ranges of hills. As I looked I saw Jimbun on the further bank. He called and beckoned to me. I went down to the water, but it ran too swift for me to cross. Jimbun got a

boat and came to fetch meo. The current was so strong it whirled the boat here and there, but he came nearer. Then I saw a mist rising, at first like a veil, then thicker. I called out, 'Jimbun, Jimbun, help!' and he answered. Presently the whole country was covered in thick clouds. I heard Jimbun calling 'Rimba! Rimba!' but the sound of his voice came fainter and fainter until it died away, so that everything was blank."

There was no dramatic effort in the girl's story; it rang out clear like straightforward truth.

Had she, I wondered, actually reached the brink of the real Sabayan?

CHAPTER XXI

People like the Dyaks, who are eternally striving to avoid the machinations of evil spirits, and whose movements are controlled by good or bad omens, naturally put a lot of faith in talismans and treasures, fondly supposed to possess miraculous properties, which had been handed down from generation to generation.

In the Undup there was carefully preserved a "Pala Antu," a spirit's head. After a good deal of persuasion this relic was brought down to Fort Alice for our inspection. A bundle covered in Turkey-red cloth was reverently deposited on the table. We stood round rather awed while the Penghulu with trembling fingers undid the wrappings. Fold after fold of the cloth was removed, until a black crinkled object like a mummified baby's head was revealed. Some of the Dyaks covered their eyes; if an earthquake had occurred then they would not have been surprised. I must say some of their reverential fear helped to make my flesh creep. They told how long, long ago the skull fell through the roof of a house accompanied by terrific lightning and thunder. I mustered up courage to inspect it closely. There was no doubt about it, it was a coconut shrunk in the course of untold years. Naturally I did not tell the Dyaks of my discovery.

Another object valued very greatly by Dyaks was a group of china figures. A caparisoned elephant, an armed horseman and one or two footmen all on a china stand. Though somewhat broken, the figures appeared to be of Siamese or Burmese origin. The group was evidently of great antiquity. How it came to rest among the Dyaks is a mystery they can throw no light on, and Heaven only knows how many times it has passed from generation to generation. An old woman brought an action before me for the return of an "antu" (spirit). She explained how years ago she had found this particular deity while digging on her paddy farm. For years, she and the members of her house had benefited by its possession. Their crops had flourished, and good health had been with them. But she was getting old, and she foresaw that when she died there would be friction among her relations to own the charm. So she buried it again on the edge of her farm. As luck would have it, a neighbor looking for wild vegetable spotted the treasure, and walked off with it, on the principle that findings are keepings. I demanded that the "god" should be produced and could hardly refrain from laughing when an old, battered, Sheffield-plate cruet stand was placed on the Court table.

The old lady eventually got her treasure back. I tried to find out the history of this old-fashioned cruetstandr. Probably it was taken from a European's bungalow in Kuching by a Dyak who accompanied the expedition sent to harry the Chinese after their insurrection in 1857r.

When I told the story to the Rajah, he said I ought to have impounded the piece of plate, as it could not have rightly belonged to either partyr. My own view is that when anything attains the dignity of "antu" among the Dyaks, it is as well to leave it aloner.

Abang Haji Taminr, the principal Native Officer, had an interesting heirloomr. This was an old sword that was named "Jenawir". It was in the custody of the head of the family and had likewise the attributes of a charm. On war expeditions it was invariably carried by a senior representative of the family, not for use, but as a rallying point, a kind of standard.

The cross hilt was of iron, and the long thin blade much rusted and fretted by age, had the indecipherable remains of some Arabic writingr. For all the world it looked as if it might have beenr, and perhaps was, a weapon used by a follower of Saladin at the time of the Crusadesr.

In July, 1909r, I was sworn in as a member of the Council Negri, an assembly comprising the Residents of districts and the senior Native Officersr. It was first constituted in 1870 to meet every three years, or oftener if required, to discuss the general policy of the Stater. There was never any cause for discussion, and the meeting became more or less a formality to enable the Rajah to greet all his principal officersr, and at the same timer, to give the outstation chiefs a week's holiday in Kuching at government expenserr.

We met in the large dining room at the Astanar. The table extending the whole length of the room was surrounded by solemn faced nativesr, for the most part resplendent in flowing robes and twisted turbans of varied huesr. Malaysr, Dyaksr, Muruts and Kayansr, all the races of Sarawak were represented therer. An armchair at the head awaited the Rajah. The Europeans were grouped in a semicircle behind. In former days officers wore a dark green and gold lace uniform complete with cocked hat and swordr, but that cost a sum of about £50. In those times officials thought a lot of their appearance; in the outstations even they wore velveteen jacketsr. We belonged to a more prosaic ager, and to mark the occasion sat and perspired in navy blue suits with "hard-boiled" shirtsr. After all, the Sarawak motto "Dum spiro spero" was always interpreted to mean "While I perspire I hope."

A low buzz of conversation filled the room; then a "stomp stomp" was heard along the verandah. There was a rustle as we rose from our seats; but it was in dead silence that the little white-haired Rajah strode into the room. He alone wore the gorgeous Sarawak uniform; and he was unaccompanied; but for all his seeming frailty his personality dominated the scene from the moment he crossed the threshold. Some men by their personality inspire love; some fear; the Rajah radiated both; nay more, he seemed to command the reverence due to a super-being. To these child-like natives he was everything--their Father, their King, almost their God.

Bowing to the assembly the Rajah took his seat and the initiation of new members proceeded at once. Natives were called first and standing before their ruler were sworn in. Mohammedans took the oath on the Koran to be faithful to the Raj; Kayans swore by the tooth of a tiger; Europeans had the Chaplain with a Bible to register their fidelity. As the candidates came forward one by one, the Rajah fixed them with those piercing far-seeing grey eyes--it seemed to me that he could read their inmost thoughts--and they must have felt as I did, the thrill of unswerving determination "to endeavor to the best of my ability to advise truthfully and justly for the good of the country and to uphold the authority of Charles Brooke as Rajah."

After this ceremony the Rajah made his speech.

In fluent Malay he referred to his growing age; the confidence he had in his officers; the need of furthering the staple products of the country; sago, pepper, and above all, rice. He terminated by declaring his undying faith in the prosperity of Sarawak, if the traditional method of government that had hitherto characterized the State was adhered to.

At the end of his speech he came down to the commonplace with a jerk. "I hope you will all dine with me this evening," he said, and forthwith stamped out of the room.

The banquet was an event that lives in the memory. The great table scintillating with glass and silver, seated round it, a hundred types representing all the races and creeds that made up the Raj; the band playing alternatively Malay and European tunes; joints, curries, champagne and gingerbeer.

At the head, the Rajah, never so distinguished looking as when in evening dress, on his breast his gleaming Orders, the only occasion on which he made a point of wearing them.

Each Resident was supposed to look after his group of Native Officers. It entailed instructing them in the art of

eating with a knife and fork, and seeing that his non-Mohammedan followers did not imbibe too freely of the strange wines, or do anything else to offend the laws of decency. Altogether the long drawn out affair was both exciting and arduous. This triennial gathering of the Council Negri was not entirely given up to pleasure making. Native Officers from the remotest districts met and exchanged views, while the Mohammedan magistrates were able to straighten out many a knotty point of Islamic law, and frame far-reaching innovations through the medium of general discussion.

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In April, 1910, I was granted seven months' furlough. Three of us joined forces. Passing through Singapore we ran into the biggest rubber boom the world has ever known. Rubber leaped up to 12/- a lb. and huge profits were made. Battery Road and Raffles Square were filled with excited gesticulating men--Europeans, Eurasians, Chinese and Indians, darting here and there with notebooks and pencils. Shares changed hands with incredible speed and as nothing stopped their upward trend, fortunes were made from nothing. In some cases shares of companies that had not even planted a rubber tree soared up to fantastic heights. One man I knew who was going home with a capital of £250 delayed his departure and cleared out a week later with a profit of £10,000.

Not all were so lucky, when the climax was reached and shares began to drop there were speculators who were badly hit.

We three travelled home by P. & O., sharing a 2nd Class cabin and it was far and away the jolliest voyage I ever made. The girls on board, mostly from the Antipodes, were charming, we never had a dull moment.

On arrival I went straight to my people in Bruges, and the next day, May 7th, King Edward died. What astonished me was the feeling shown by the Belgians, it might have been their own king who had passed away. Flags were universally half-masted, bells were tolled from churches and the stately old Belfry. King Edward had certainly captured the heart of Europe.

When I was home in 1904, motor cars were rarely to be seen, horse-buses and hansom cabs filled the London streets. In 1910, I found myself plunged into the whirl of motor traffic. Hansom cabs were, however, still plying for hire and we usually made it a point of honor to patronize them rather than the new-fangled taxis.

To my great joy I even discovered hansom cabs in Oxford in 1916, but I fear they can only be found in museums now.

That year 1910 was the last view I had of England in pre-war times. We were confident in the security of the world then. Looking back it seems to have been a carefree, gay existence. Theaters were booming with real plays, not American imitations. Picture palaces and cocktail bars were unknown, but we had the music-halls.

Clubs were crowded and no man who valued his self-respect would walk down Piccadilly without a top-hat and morning-coat.

I sailed for the East in November, little dreaming that I should next return with the world in the throes of war.

* * * * *

I think that the years 1911-12 might be designated the Planting Era. Natives caught the rubber infection badly. Malays planted up all the land they could. Dyaks followed suit, and rubber banished all thoughts of tribal warfare and head hunting. Peace, perfect peace, reigned in the 2nd Division, in fact throughout the country.

In my annual report in 1912 I was able to state: "It is a significant sign of tranquil times, that, I believe for the first time in the history of the 2nd Division, a year has passed without a single death having been reported from foul play or from tribal warfare."

The only person who foresaw trouble from this plethora of planting was the Rajah himself. As far back as 1909 he wrote deprecating wild speculation. These are his words: "The unlimited expansion of cultivation of rubber that will finally take place among tens of thousands of natives will more than meet the demand and will ultimately, in fact must bring the price of the rubber down to about \$50 a pikul (roughly 1/- a lb.)."

The crises that have since overwhelmed Malaya are proof of the Rajah's prophecy, but even he could not visualize rubber at 2d. a lb.

Throughout his time the Rajah never failed to urge the planting of sago and pepper, the two products that had never failed Sarawak.

It is a great pity that the Government in the past did not further the cultivation of these two staple products by every means in its power.

I remember at Simanggang pointing out to the Rajah a well-kept, promising young rubber garden owned by some Malays. I was rather proud of the progress in my district.

The Rajah gave it a cursory glance and muttered, as he walk off abruptly, "H'mf! I would rather see it planted up with paddy."

The Rajah continued to make his yearly visit to Simanggang. He liked to go home in October to his place at Cirencester, where he could get as much hunting as he wanted. At the age of eighty-four he could still follow a straight line after hounds. In March or April he was back in Sarawak as energetic as ever.

It was on one of his visits to the 2nd Division that I accompanied him on an evening walk to the top of the height known then as the Upper Cowman's hill, now I believe the site of the Residency.

The Rajah sat down and looked out at the country he loved so well, as fair a view as any in Sarawak. Directly below, the "Dhoby's Pond" sparkled; some graceful "sabun" palms cast long shadows over the meadow-like cattle ground which extended to a dark wall of jungle; in the near distance the lesser heights of Raya; further back still, the grey blue range of Klingkang with Marup Mountain and Tiang Laju. From the hills of ulu Skrang to the mountains of the Undup, a panorama of the land that in pain and strife had given birth to a State.

The Rajah must have thought of his early days when the war-cry and the war-drum thrilled through this region, Sarawak's battle area, of Rentap and Sadok, of Keppel, of the "Dido" and the fleeing pirates of Undup. Perhaps he thought too of his old followers, faithful to death, waiting to greet him "over there" when his time came.

The Rajah sat with bowed head and mused, swinging his cane to and fro as was his wont; then he turned to me, a softness in his eyes.

"When I die, Ward, I should like my body to rest just here, among the people I love best. Remember that."

The wish was never to be fulfilled.

I wonder sometimes what would have been the effect if Charles Brooke had had his resting place at Simanggang. The grave most certainly would have been hallowed, "keramat" as the Malays say; pilgrims from all over the country would have visited it. Perhaps, though, in the course of time, the stone and not the memory would have been revered; now the people hold in their hearts a symbol, and Charles Brooke Rajah remains enshrined in minds and legend the true model ruler and benefactor.

CHAPTER XXII

In 1912, the revolution in China brought about the greatest change in the characteristic of the Chinese. On the election of Dr. Sun Yat Sen as President of the new republic, the Chinese saw the dawn of a progressive era. Flags were flown, crackers exploded and the distinctive "touchang" or pigtail was discarded en masse. Tamil barbers did a roaring trade, but the Chinese national physiognomy was not greatly improved.

Malay policemen, who had found the touchang a useful adjunct for the control of malefactors, particularly deplored its disappearance, though many had been tricked by artful scoundrels who used to secrete fish-hooks in their oily plait. As a sign of the altered times it is interesting to be reminded that not long before, a Chinese gang-foreman in a sago factory had been imprisoned by the Kuching Court for committing the gravest insult to an unruly coolie by cutting off his pigtail.

In these days of peace I took the opportunity to make trips to those parts of the district that lay away from the main rivers, and so were not often visited. Up the Undup to Nimong where there is a fairy waterfall; foaming water running down a perpendicular wall of dark rock, a sight scarcely ever seen by the many Europeans who have served at Simanggang. From Brayong along the crest of Tinteng Raya to Marup--a walk of marvelous views. From the Krian to the Rimbas from Debak to Pakuo.

All these journeys I made on foot spending the nights at Dyak houses.

One trip particularly lives in my memory, because in the house of Penghulu Unji near the foot of Sadok I witnessed the dance of the Dyak women when they welcome the head of an enemy.

Head hunting down river had become so much an event of the past that the rituals connected with it were fast dying out, and only in a few out-of-the-way spots were the young girls taught the traditional song and dance, the only dance a Dyak woman performs. In the ulu Layar there were still a few old dames who had passed on the rites to the younger generation, but it was with the utmost difficulty that the Penghulu could induce any of them to give a special performance. Naturally the zest provided by a fresh head was lacking and it was with many apologies that permission was asked to use an old trophy.

At night the long house was crowded with people from the neighboring villages.

A clear space was reserved in the center of the main hall, which extended some 500 feet, the whole length of the house. On each side sat the tightly packed crowd; the only illumination a few dim oil lights hung on the posts.

The drums started throbbing, the gongs beat a slow measure; from out of the gloom a file of girls solemnly paced to the main entrance. They were dressed in their most gorgeous attire. Belts of silver dollars jingled against their brass corselets; silver tiaras on their heads had bells that tinkled with every step. In their hands they held bunches of "daun isang," the leaves of a jungle palm that rustled when shook like thousands of whispers. The long line reached the door; the gongs and drums beat furiously. With an unearthly yell that brought us almost to our feet, an old woman bounded into the house holding aloft the trophy, hidden also in the bunch of palm leaves.

Taking her place at the head of the girls, the old hag started a shuffling dance down the center of the house, swinging the trophy to and fro, turning every now and then to the line of girls following, throwing the morbid object to the leader who passed it on to the next and so on, exactly as "rugger" players might pass the ball from one to another. Then the principal actress started a remarkably tuneful incantation which was taken up by the next in the line until one by one all joined in, effecting a harmonious display of part singing that was astonishingly pleasing even to European ears. Never have I wished so much for the gift of transcribing music to preserve this haunting chant.

The scene was indescribable. Up and down the long house, the file of girls danced, hazy figures in the flickering light, yet impressive with the grace of motion. Jingle, tinkle, rustle, at every movement; above all the lilt of their song, the beat of drums, the thrilling vibration of gongs. It struck the strings of savagery inherent in all men. I felt my heart beating and clenched my hands to retain control. About me a mass of fixed faces, staring eyes, and forms that rippled to the music.

Every now and then the tune swelled and emotions broke bounds. Fierce war cries pierced the night, freezing the heated blood.

If this play-acting could so arouse the passions, what would be the effect? I wondered, of the real thing, the head of an enemy with the blood still fresh, and the skin still soft?

As it was, the tension was getting electrical; the war cries grew more insistent; men shuffled and looked sideways at each other.

I pulled myself together and the Penghulu, already nervous of consequences, stopped the proceedings, and for the rest of the evening the young men let off steam in the more prosaic war dances.

On that tour we walked from the Upper Saribas to the Skrang, a river abounding with memories of Sarawak in bygone times.

The Skrang Dyaks, inveterate allies of the Saribas, held a grisly record of ferocity in the days of tribal warfare, piracy and unbridled head hunting.

The hereditary chief was Penghulu Sidu, a round-faced stubby old man, half blind with red-rimmed, mattery eyes, his head shaved like a billiard ball and his lips blackened with perpetual chewing. His manner was courteous, his nature stingy.

His wife, in accordance with custom, caught a fine chicken to present to me as a symbol of hospitality; Sidu hastily intercepted her and despite her remonstrances substituted a skinny bird that was on the point of death. For his part old Sidu got all he could out of the white man--gin, tobacco, an old coat or a worn-out hat. He was a prince of beggars, but I owe him no grudge; I have spent many a happy hour hunting, fishing and drinking with him.

Going down the Skrang one passes places immemorably connected with Dyak folklore.

Lubok Molong, Sago Bay, is the traditional spot where Apai Salui the Fool lived. Many stories are told of him. He came back one evening with a bundle of young sago plants for his garden. It was too late to plant them out so he threw the lot in the river to keep them fresh, marking the side of the boat at the exact spot he had cast them overboard. Having fastened the boat with a long rope he went to bed. In the morning Apai Salui dived from his boat at the marked spot, but was surprised to find his sago had gone. It took Apai Salui some days to discover that his boat moved with the tide.

Baling hill, Dyaks say, was once on the south bank of the Skrang, but it had a dispute with a neighboring hill, Sui, and getting the worst of the quarrel was compelled to flee to the north bank. I expect this fable originated owing to a change in the course of the river.

Another place, Tangga Biji (Biji's Ladder), commemorates the effort made by the Dyak chief Biji to build a wooden ladder so that he could see what was beyond the clouds. Stupidly enough he forgot to use hard wood, with the result that white ants ate away the supports and the structure came down with a run.

It will be noticed there is a savor of the Tower of Babel in this story.

The Dyak account of the Creation is interesting. Dyaks have a vague impression of a supreme deity known as Petara. Petara had seven children. The first born, a boy, was deficient, so he was thrown into a pit to become Pulang Gana, god of the earth. The second, a girl, was minus a nose; she was set adrift on a river and became Rajah Jewata, the god of fishes. The third child had no human form; it was hung up on a tree to blossom into an orchid. The fourth, a girl named Siti Permani, was cut into small pieces, each bit transforming itself into paddy, fruit and various vegetation. The fifth child, who had a white stripe around his waist, became Ini Anda, god of the firmament. The sixth child turned into animals and birds, while the seventh was a girl called Dayang Petri, who insisted on living on rice. She married a man with the name of Sakumbang Maran Bunsu Chenaga Umbang, and they were paddy planters. Work was easy in those days. The paddy fruited periodically; it reaped itself and jumped into baskets which walked to the Dayang's home spontaneously. What is more the paddy husked itself.

One day Dayang Petri, out of curiosity, began to reap the paddy herself and henceforth the paddy refused to do it of its own accord. She also stopped a basket walking home, to see what would happen, and after that all the baskets had to be carried.

Dayang Petri did another stupid thing.

Irritated at seeing the paddy grains dancing up and down husking themselves, she beat the seeds with a stick. That finished it; women have to pound and husk the paddy themselves now.

We are taught that the Creation occupied six days, seven with the day of rest; Dyaks attribute it to the seven children of Petara.

We owe a lot of pain and misery to the curiosity of Eve; in the same way the meddling of Dayang Petri has made life much harder for the Dyak.

Stories of the Flood are common all over the Dyak country. The old tales of the Genesis taught to generations of Europeans have their counterpart in the Dyak legends.

* * * * *

The year 1913 was still a dream of peace; little to worry about, nothing to disturb the progress of our affairs--the lull before the storm.

I took advantage of six weeks local leave to go to Ceylon. I traveled from Singapore in the North German Lloyd "Bülów." The comfort of that ship was striking compared to our much vaunted British liners. The German officers and stewards could not do enough to make us comfortable. The only objection I had was to the string band; very pleasant and harmonious during the tea hour or dinner, but, in my opinion, entirely unnecessary on Sunday morning playing dirgeful hymns outside the cabin doors.

Colombo I had visited often; all the same the Galle Face Hotel is at any time a kaleidoscope of interest from the hordes of crows to the ever-changing crowd of travelers gathered from all points of the world.

I found the journey to Kandy a revelation of scenic loveliness. As the train steadily climbs into the interior it opens up entrancing panoramas of fertile valleys and wooded mountains. It is something to be seen to be believed.

I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Mr. Kelway Bamber, a well-known scientist and botanist. Under his guidance I saw all that was worth seeing in the wonderful Peredenya gardens. Knowing that I was on my way to Newara Eliya he pressed me to take his overcoat. I had never heard of such a garment in the tropics and disdainfully refused the offer. I was a fool.

Kandy took my whole fancy. The lake, the temples, natty bungalows with English gardens. A sleepy sensuous spot, redolent of a voluptuous past. Sacred elephants, dancing girls and scented flowers.

Kandy, the capital of Ceylon, lives now in peaceful retirement, ousted by her overgrown, gaudy offspring Colombo. But she has gained in age and charm.

At Newara Eliya, 8,000 feet up, it was odd to find no mosquito nets, wallpaper on the walls, and fires in the grates.

The overcoat would have been useful. It was cold in the late afternoons when white mists enveloped the country. My tropical clothing left me shivering. The result a chill and a cold.

I am glad I saw something of Ceylon; it is a gem spoiled only by the rapaciousness of its people. Wherever you go in the island the slightest attention on the part of the natives means outstretched hands for undeserved tips.

* * * * *

Shortly after my return to Simanggang an incident occurred that was rather characteristic of the Rajah's discipline. It affected me also.

The Resident of the 3rd Division arrived in Kuching from home leave with two pedigreed fox terriers. A launch was waiting to transport him to Sibu. He sailed immediately with his belongings. It never crossed his mind that he was contravening an Order prohibiting the import of dogs.

The Rajah got to hear of it and was very irate, ordered the dogs to be destroyed and reduced the officer to inferior rank and sent him to take charge of a small out-of-the-way station.

The Rajah himself was in England and the Rajah Muda asked me to take over the 3rd Division. I arrived at Sibu in June 1914, and began to pick up the threads of my work.

In many ways it was a more important post than Simanggang. Sibu was fast becoming a flourishing port with direct communication with Singapore.

Fort Brooke, the usual massive ironwood structure, dominated the front; alongside was the Residency, a commodious bungalow with large reception rooms and a wide verandah overlooking the expanse of water formed by the confluence of the Rejang and Igan rivers. More bungalows housed other officials, while the bazaar was a street of brick-built shops much superior to the wooden shacks I had hitherto met with up-country.

The Island Club was the evening rendezvous and the Sibu custom was to play poker there on Saturday evenings.

I liked the spaciousness of the Residency. I enjoyed the social element but I did not feel at home. There was a restraint about Sibu I never experienced at Simanggang; the Rejang Dyaks were more uncouth and turbulent than their Batang Lupar brothers; one never met the local Malays or Chinese on the same friendly footing that made it so pleasant in the 2nd Division.

It was therefore not a great blow when the Rajah sent instructions for me to return to Simanggang. To salve my conscience I wrote to the Rajah to find out the reason of all this pitchforking backwards and forwards.

I received a delightful letter in reply absolving me from all blame, and merely stating that the appointment made by the Rajah Muda had not fitted in with his plans. I soon understood that the Rajah's plan was to reinstate the former Resident after he had expiated his crime by a few months' exile.

It was the end of July when I got my orders to return to the 2nd Division.

The night before I left I met an Austrian Father, a member of the Roman Catholic Mission. He was full of the news he had received of trouble between Austria, Serbia and Russia.

The Father foretold terrible events in the near future. We laughed at him, confident there could be no danger. We finished our poker, drank our stengahs and that was how we treated the first rumblings of war.

It was with a light heart that I started back for the 2nd Division. I would not wait for a launch and commandeering a fishing boat sailed round the coast to Kabong, where H. L. Owen and Stuart Cunynghame met me.

Two days later we were at Simanggang. I felt I was home again.

On the evening of August 22nd, we were sitting on the verandah of the Rajah's bungalow when the mail arrived. I opened a letter from the Rajah Muda who was full of kindness. "I am sorry to have caused you all so much bother and confusion, but did it all for the best and for what I took to be in the best interests of the stations concerned, but the Rajah has ruled otherwise so there is no more to be said." Then for the first time we learned that all Europe was engulfed in War.

This is what we heard:

"The North Sea battle is a victory of some importance. Private news from Singapore says that 16 English ships went to the bottom including the 'Queen Mary' and Admiral Jellicoe--24 Germans were sunk and 8 captured. You will be glad to hear of the plucky defense of the Belgians. They seem to have knocked the Germans every time so far. A huge battle is impending somewhere in the neighborhood of Waterloo. English and French are pouring in through Belgium. Togoland in Africa has been seized from the Germans and I suppose now the German Fleet is

no more, she, Germany will lose all her foreign possessions. Russia is making some headway in N.E. Germany and has also crossed into Austria. No home mail"

Can it be wondered after that that a little group of Englishmen in the middle of Borneo had that night an extra drink to celebrate the great victories of the Allied forces and went to bed full of confidence that the War was all but over.

How could we even dream that by the time that letter reached us, the German High Sea Fleet was still intact, Liege, Namur and Brussels had fallen and our men at Mons were on the point of retiring before an avalanche of field-grey and shells.

CHAPTER XXIII

War! It was impossible in our quiet little outpost to realize the catastrophe that had upset Civilization. Beyond the fact that our mails arrived even more irregularly than before there was nothing to disturb the ordinary routine. When we got our newspapers already several weeks old it was difficult to comprehend the real state of affairs; it seemed fantastic that a battle front extended from the North Sea to Russia. The war was so far away; nothing had as yet touched us personally. We read our news with the same detached interest we might give to an account of the Napoleonic campaigns.

With us life went on as usual. News from home was never made to be depressing; my own people in Belgium sent reassuring letters. I had not grasped the fact that the net was closing round them. It was not until later, when friends and relations were reported dead, wounded or missing; when news of my parents ceased altogether, that the immensity of the world war slowly dawned on our understanding, and we began to feel uncomfortable; restless to be doing something more active for the Empire.

In Kuching, news of the rupture between Germany and Russia was received on August 6th, but it was not until the 11th that official news came of Britain's entry into the struggle. The "Sarawak Gazette" of August 17th published a Proclamation stating that the Officer Administering the Government of the Straits Settlements "was satisfied by information received from a Secretary of State that war had broken out between His Majesty King George V and His Majesty the Emperor of Germany and between their respective subjects--Sarawak, for the first time in her history, was at war with a foreign power.

The immediate result of this news was a small panic in Kuching with regard to the supply of foodstuffs. A rumor circulated that Singapore had stopped all exports. At the same time traders were told the Singapore markets were closed for dealings in jungle produce, pepper and other trade commodities. This was the great blow, because the Chinese were more concerned about the shortage of money and lack of work than shortage of food. After all, Sarawak could supply rice, and as the "Gazette" said, "when that runs short what about sago." There were also adequate resources of fish, vegetables, fowls and pigs. Nevertheless, that did not prevent local firms from raising the price of rice and condensed milk--a very popular commodity with Chinese and Malays--by 100% until the Government stepped in, took charge of all necessaries and controlled prices. Further,

an official was sent to Singapore to negotiate for food supplies; the position was found to have been exaggerated and everything settled down quietly.

To start with, we certainly had not grasped the awful potentialities of war. In view of the extreme secrecy employed later on with regard to the movements of forces and ships it is interesting to note how absurdly free from dissimulation we were at the beginning of the war. The "Sarawak Gazette" reprinted from a Singapore paper a detailed list of all the fleets in Far Eastern waters, and the whereabouts of the Japanese fleet cruising in our vicinity.

A North German Lloyd ship, "Rajah," steamed into Rejang on August 7th to load timber, no one being aware of the outbreak of war between Germany and Great Britain. After ten days, when the news was known, the Captain thought he had better see the Resident in Kuching. The ship's officers were told they were placed on parole; they returned to their ship and when they were ready they were allowed to sail for Manila. Sarawak lost the chance of making a useful prize, but just then, of course, everyone thought that war was a gentleman's game.

When I visited Kuching at the end of August for Race Week there was nothing to indicate wartime. The race meeting was the one burning topic of the day. We danced at the Astana, the Club and the Borneo Company's bungalow; we played the usual lawn-tennis, golf and bowling tournaments. The last thing we seemed to care about was the war. News was very scanty; the fighting was thousands of miles away; it never struck our minds as we danced that the Germans were on the point of overwhelming Paris. What we were asked to do, though, we did. An appeal was issued for the Prince of Wales Relief Fund; some \$12,000 was collected in Sarawak for this cause alone before it was merged into others.

One heard a good deal of the exploits of the "Emden" in those days. I have often wondered why Sarawak was not visited. The lack of telegraphic communication, its defenseless position, would have made it ideal for revictualing and even for replenishing fuel stores. As a matter of fact I fancy the Japanese navy did a lot of unostentatious patrol work round our coast. Once from the sands at Kabong I saw in the hazy distance the outline of a small grey warship. The "Emden" immediately flashed across my mind and I racked my brain furiously thinking what to do if she came into the Kalaka. I pictured myself bravely defending the port with half a dozen Malay policemen and a few Snider rifles. Then I saw another grey ship emerge from the mist and they steamed off together. I think now they must have been Jap ships keeping our seas open.

The consequences of war soon began to be felt. Some of the younger men were on the Reserve of Officers, so they had to go. Others, creepers on the rubber plantations and so on, felt the call and went also. I know that some, without a cent to take them home, were liberally helped by local patriots whose generosity was never openly acknowledged.

The drainage of men was disturbing, but what really affected Sarawak more as a State was the declaration of war between Great Britain and Turkey in November. Malays invariably regarded Stambul, the old Constantinople, as the axis of Mohammedanism, and for a brief while there was the nightmare thought that a Holy War might ensue, a fanatical uprising of Mohammedans against Christian infidels. If that idea had been part of the scheme of the Central Powers it was a particularly damp squib. I am sure it never entered the heads of the Sarawak Malays. The Aga Khan's "Appeal for Loyalty" to Mohammedans reprinted in Malay was received with entire approbation.

I boldly asked my Native Officers what they thought of the situation. Their answer was terse. They believed Turkey had been shamefully tricked, but they went further, they said that Sultan was "bodoh," a fool! Can you imagine a Roman Catholic under any circumstances applying a similar term to the Pope? Because it means much the same thing.

All through the war the Malays were most loyal, exceedingly interested in all the news from the front. Excellent propaganda work was the publication of picture papers with descriptions in Malay.

I can remember passing many hours in my office with relays of natives all absorbed in my pitiful attempts to explain modern warfare, when my hearers had never seen or imagined an aeroplane, a submarine or a gun bigger than the three-pounder muzzle-loaders we had in the fort.

What was the Rajah's attitude towards the war?

I cannot do better than quote his words in a speech he made on Christmas Day, 1914, more telling because he rarely gave utterance in public:

"And now I would touch on this sad war which is filling the minds of all men and women. I would ask what are we fighting for? For peace which we have not enjoyed for the last fifteen to twenty years. Our ears have been always filled with Dreadnoughts and scares; taxes laid out on armaments that ought to be used beneficially for the inhabitants and their country's welfare. It is fortunate the war has at last come to pass, as had it come, say, ten years later, it would have gone very hard

with our independence; and it is to be regretted it did not take place ten years ago when we might have had a much easier task. We fight for peace and to prevent an iron despotism trampling and crushing the smaller States and even weakening ourselves and France. I look on it that all nations and peoples and individuals have two sides to their character--the one the rough side and the other the smooth; or, in other words, on the one side is the material and the other the ideal. The material is the Bulldog side, rough, hard, strong, combative, warlike; and however much we may admire the military side, its pomp and panoply, its chivalry, bravery and renown, this is the side that the Germans have scientifically for the last fifty years been bringing to a wonderful pitch of strength and perfection in order to overcome the whole of Europe, if not the world, and this is what they will certainly do with success if we, the Allies, are unable to overcome and conquer this tyrannical spirit and shape our affairs so that a lasting peace may be attained in the future. No doubt the military side is necessary, but a limit is required to curb and control it.

"Now I would look on the other side--where certain thinking and studious men devote their lives to thought and study, living in a world of their own, solving social problems and scientific methods to aid mankind and the world to attain a higher standard of intelligence and intellect, to improve the gifts that are most to be desired such as literature, music, painting, sculpture, and the many branches of civil engineering--and whatever we may think of military glory it is only second to the higher class of the mental or ideal side which leaves an everlasting monument of mental culture for future generations."

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The dawn of 1915 brought the hard truth home to us that the war was not to be an affair of a few months. I knew now that my parents were shut up in Bruges, swallowed up in the whirlpool of events; the home papers had columns of killed and missing. Like thousands of Englishmen out East I began to worry whether I was playing my part. I was due for home leave the end of March, the opportunity seemed made for me to offer my services. A man on the Staff in Singapore to whom I wrote for advice was chilling. "After eighteen years in the tropics," he said, "you would be no damned use at the front, and what's more, you would be a damned nuisance to everybody." I believe now he was perfectly right and that Englishmen who had spent many years in the East could not stand the rigor of a European campaign, but at the time I was distinctly hurt and my conscience still pricked me.

Then we got the news of the mutiny of the 5th Light Infantry, the Indian regiment in Singapore. The S.S. "Kuching"

was in harbor there at the time of the outbreak on February 15th. She arrived at Sarawak on the 19th and having anchored down river the Captain telephoned the news to the Resident. It was understood that the Governor and one hundred and fifty Europeans had been massacred. There was a number of Sepoys in the Rangers; the Resident took prompt action and before the "Kuching" had steamed to her wharf, all firearms were deposited in the armory under special guard and the munitions secretly moved to safety.

As a matter of fact, beyond the natural horror at the occurrence, the mutiny caused no undue excitement in Sarawak; if anything, loyalty to the Rajah and his cause seemed strengthened. Only later did we learn how much the émeute had been exaggerated. But the loss of thirty Europeans was bad enough, and had the mutineers been able to keep to their original scheme, there is no knowing what Singapore would have suffered.

I wrote to the Rajah asking him to release me for service with the forces. In reply I got a long letter giving instructions on various matters and at the end a short paragraph: "It is not necessary for you to join the army. You have your work here and it is not for the individual officer to decide in what capacity he can best serve the interests of all." By the same mail I had another letter from the Rajah ordering me to organize a force of 1,200 picked Dyaks and 600 Malays for action against the Balleh Dyaks who had already murdered a dozen and a half inoffensive persons in the 3rd Division, and then, under the leadership of a swashbuckler named Tabor, had invaded my district and taken five heads in the upper Saribas.

As my leave was already due it looked as if I was to miss all this fun. I wrote at once to the Rajah asking for a postponement of my furlough, and for permission to join the expedition. In his reply he seemed pleased that I would forego my leave, but said if I accompanied the force I must "go on my own," a somewhat anomalous position. However, Baring-Gould in command of the affair sent me instructions to take charge of the Batang Lupar detachment.

The next month was a busy one selecting the force. We had numbers of ex-soldier Dyaks to pick from, and these were the first choicer. We had to be careful to divide the chosen men equally among the various tribes in order to prevent jealousy, because there is nothing in the world a Dyak is more keen about than a chance of fighting. Fort Alice was thronged daily with young, old, even decrepit warriors, all clamoring to be taken. Hundreds, finding themselves not included in the official force, paddled their own canoes all the way to Sibuan and joined up there. Arms and ammunition had to be checked; Snider rifles were served out, and each man was provided with a rope

ring covered in red cloth to wear round his head; it combined protection against a cutting blow and a distinctive mark in a melee. The middle of May I had the whole force on board the "Natuna" at Lingga and we sailed straightway for Sibu. The five-hundred-ton ship was a remarkable sight, crammed--hold, decks, and even rigging--with nearly 2,000 souls. How they ever slept and cooked or ate I never knew or dared to inquire. Luckily the sea was calm and steaming up the Rejang river past Sibu we reached the rendezvous at Kapit. The place was swarming with Dyaks; as far as one could see the river banks were hidden by their boats; over 10,000 men had turned out in the Rajah's cause--one of the largest Dyak forces ever gathered on active service in Sarawak.

The Rajah himself was there on board the "Zahora."

Six Europeans accompanied the expedition and an Instructor was in command of a hundred Sarawak Rangers armed with a seven-pounder M.L. gun.

The prerogative of fighting the Rajah's wars is a highly prized privilege of the Batang Lupa and Rejang Dyaks; for the most part they went in their own boats, armed with their own weapons, rationed themselves and received no pay. It is only right to say that under judicious supervision they were able to appropriate any abandoned loot in the enemy's country; this sometimes meant quite a lucrative proposition and the enemy expected nothing else.

The Rajah invariably fixed his expeditions so that possible contact with the enemy would occur about the time of full moon.

The day before we started up-river the Rajah met the Dyak headmen in the blockhouse at Kapit. The floor was packed with squatting humanity in full war paint, the hornbills' feathers in the war-caps nodding like bracken in the breeze.

The Rajah made a short speech, praised their loyalty and warned them to act cautiously, because the Balleh meant defiance. When he finished, the chiefs came forward to touch his hand. There was a real atmosphere of "do or die" about the proceedings; rather thrilling to see these seasoned upstanding warriors in gaudy war-coats and feathers making their farewell obeisance to their white Ruler.

The next morning the force moved.

The Rajah stood on his quarter-deck, a sparse figure in dark coat and duck trousers, wearing a very dirty Homburg hat which he ceremoniously doffed as boat after boat passed with up-raised paddles and wild Dyak warcries. The Europeans came

last, as we flashed by, the Rajah shouted, "Good-luck,r" and we could see his silhouette waving until we turned the bend. I have no doubt his thoughts went back to the many occasions when he had led similar expeditions.

That night we were at Mujong mouth. Boats filled the river, Dyaks the shore; camp fires and hubbub everywhere. Some enemy scouts came too close in the early morning. They paid the penalty. The force jubilated. On again, but now the European boats led the van, to prevent others slipping through; Dyaks were always striving to push forward to get first blood. After shouting ourselves hoarse we formed our boats abreast and standing up with long bamboo poles belabored any crew that attempted to break the line. As the river narrowed the task was easier, but now we had to contend with the enemy's tactics.

Mammoth trees had been felled across the stream, generally at a point where a rapid made progress sufficiently difficult. These booms had to be hewn apart with axes while a wary eye was necessary to forestall an ambush. At one place we were held up in a gorge where the swift flowing river cut through precipitous wooded hills. Looking back as far as I could see, the waterway was packed with boats as tight as sardines. On the steep jungled slopes I knew that a number of forest giants had been hewn nearly through by the enemy, just tottering and kept from crashing on our boats by strained rattan cords. I felt I could scarcely breathe, awaiting an avalanche. If only the enemy had stayed to cut the supports it must have gone hard with us. Luckily their pluck always seemed to fail them at the last moment.

For a week we struggled up the Melinau, shallow from lack of rain; punting, pulling, shoving the hundreds of boats over a succession of rapids; paddling where the water lay deep enough over the pebbled bed. My boat at last grounded with an ominous grate--an ugly rock protruded through the bottom and water gushed in. Discarded shells of canoes littered the banks, the stranded occupants disposing themselves in other boats already too much burdened. They found a "bong" for me abandoned by the enemy.

Every morning scouts were sent out through the thick jungle on either side; well ahead of the main force, to anticipate an attack. Batang Lupa Dyaks on the left bank; Rejang Dyaks on the right.

As soon as dawn had broken we would rise and call lustily for volunteers. "Men of the Batang Lupa, who is for scout work? Come quickly! Let those of the Rejang see that we are fearless! Remember; do not bring shame on the land of your birth!" The response was never faltering; war-coated warriors,

complete with spear and shield, would tumble from their boats and soon the long line of skirmishers was writhing its way through the undergrowth

Now we came to some enemy houses on cleared hillocks near the river, evacuated and burned by the fleeing inhabitants. Later on as we glided along a pleasant reach I heard firing and shouts ahead. My crew dug their paddles into the water; we raced to the spot. I landed, revolver in hand, as a little band of Dyaks emerged carrying three wounded men. I did what I could for them until the dresser arrived, but by this time the firing had ceased. It was our first scrap and seven of the rebels paid the penalty.

That evening the fleet lay alongside a great pebble bed exposed by the shrunken river. At midnight I woke. The moon was at the full. From the hundreds of boats there was not a sound. The weary force slept unconscious; an owl hooted; jungle insects held their nightly concert and the river gurgled soothingly in its toney cradle. The sentries on shore were nodding, infected by the general somnolence. I thought of what would happen if the enemy made a surprise attack. Men trapped in their boats; the panic and the massacre.

There are occasions like this when one feels powerless to do anything; when one hopes for the best and trusts to luck. I turned in and slept till dawn.

The following morning we rounded the next bend of the river. On the bank were the remains of a rebel camp; shelters where they had slept; embers where they had cooked their morning meal, still hot. Five hundred yards had separated us and if they had had the will the enemy could have destroyed the government force!

News filtered in that our foe had retired inland to Bukit Salonga. We had expected this move because the Balleh Dyaks always boasted the hill was impregnable.

Before marching inland we cleared a space for a base camp of leaf-roofed shelters. The European officers shared a hastily constructed hut and that night held a "sing-song." The birds and beasts of the Bornean jungle, to say nothing of thousands of Bornean natives, heard "Tipperary" for the first time.

The way to Salong was no joy. The 7-pounder gun had to be carried and a 7-pounder gun with wheels, limber and all, assumes the weight of several tons when shouldered along narrow jungle paths, up hills, down dales and over slippery rocks; in addition, there were chests of stores, provisions and ammunition. But it was done.

We came to a halt at last at the foot of Salong Hill. Above us rose a precipitous height clad with forest, the only access to the top a narrow path along a ridge. From the summit war-cries rang out, rocks were heaved down on us and loud voices, as if from the skies, hurled obscene references to our relations in general and to the down river Dyaks in particular. That touched our fellows on the raw. Although it was an impossible feat many of them broke away from us to scale the sides.

I was surveying the position from the base when a warning voice sang out. Looking up, I saw the whole hill tumbling down on top of us. I stood transfixed for a second or two until my orderly grabbed me by the arm and dragged me under shelter of a rock. The next few minutes live in my memory as the culmination of the most terrifying din I have ever heard.

When we had more or less recovered our senses, we understood. The rebels had cut the trees loose at the top of the hill with the result that the whole jungled hillside had crashed to the bottom, carried away with an awful sound of rending and tearing.

The rocks saved our lives and little harm was done, but the momentary glance of that hill collapsing was a sensation of helpless fear I shall never forget. All that night the crashing of stones and falling trees continued and we were powerless to get at the folk on the summit of Salong.

In the morning a hillock was cleared, the gun mounted. The first few shells were wide and greeted with derisive jeers from the top, then the Rangers got the range, the shells burst over the ridge. We could hear shouts of consternation this time. At nightfall we held our hand; there was wailing on the hill but no hint of surrender.

The next morning we essayed a shot, but now there was deathly silence on Salong. "Cease fire!" Baring-Gould sent his scouts forward; we followed cautiously along the only path. The hill was deserted; the camp was there; property scattered everywhere, and some dead bodies lay cold.

Our task was accomplished. The Balleh had had their punishment.

Embarked again we shot down the river rapids, covering in one day what had taken three to come up.

At Kapit the Rajah received us with undisguised joy. He had heard jumbled rumors of our fate and had passed most of his time pacing the deck of the "Zahora" in a torment of anxiety.

CHAPTER XXIV

Few of us realized that the Rajah was getting very old. It was almost incredible that with his virile personality, his strength of purpose and clear intellect, he had reached his eighty-sixth year.

But at the Council Negri as he faced his Chiefs, the impression burned in my mind that he felt it was the last time he would meet them gathered to give him fealty. His gaze rested on them lingeringly, and his voice usually so firm, was tinged with emotion when he spoke of the sixty years he had lived in the country. "I think," he said, "after so long a period you will allow me to open my mouth and give my opinion truthfully. There may be others who may appear after my time with soft and smiling countenances to deprive you of what I solemnly and truly consider to be your right and that is THE LAND. It is your inheritance on which your flesh and blood exists, the source of your self-existence which, if once lost, no amount of money could ever recover. After my life the future will remain with you to be independent and free citizens, or be a humbled and inferior class without pride in yourselves or in your race. You must choose between the two, the owner or master on one side or the dependent and coolie on the other. It is for you to see that whoever rules this land that the land is not granted away to strangers. This is the danger after I have passed away. I am now old and cannot live many more years, if any. I have had a long life, but my cord must have nearly reached its end. I now bid you good-bye."

In the hush that followed these touching words the Rajah sat for a moment or two in his straight-backed chair looking upwards. I saw his lips moving. Then he pulled himself together. A Brooke should never show sentiment. He rose and left the room with the dignity of an emperor.

In Kuching there was some discussion as to who would succeed the retiring Resident, Mr. Kirkpatrick-Caldecote. It did not concern me and I returned to Simanggang to interview the Ulu Ais who, as the result of the Balleh disturbances, were beginning to get a bit uppish also. I had not been back a month when an express boat arrived with letters. The Rajah wrote that he wished me to come to Kuching immediately. "I want you to take over the duties of Resident. A launch awaits you. Come here and think it over." I had never imagined for a moment that such an appointment--the senior post in the Government--would come my way. It caught me in a maze of uncertainty. I was

perfectly happy in the freedom of outstation life; the Resident in Kuching was a fettered person, chained to his office. There were other officers in the Service senior to me. How could I at the age of thirty-six hope to exercise authority over them? The Rajah spoke of a new organization, a Committee of Administration that was to lighten the duties of the Resident, but it all seemed very involved. Grave doubts assailed me. At the same time anyone with a spark of ambition must have experienced a sense of the honor done him. I felt a pleasurable thrill in that.

The Rajah's wish was law.

In the grey before dawn I left the Fort. A little group of Native Officers with one or two Chinese from the bazaar had gathered to say good-bye. Preceded by a policeman carrying a hurricane lamp I took my place in the boat, dazed and unhappy. We pushed off; the paddles bit the water. Farewell, Simanggang!

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In Kuching I took up my quarter at the Residency. Here was a problem that caused me to reflect as much as anything whether I was wise in taking up the appointment. The Residency was not a government building. Each new Resident took it over from his predecessor by the payment of \$10,000. The money could be borrowed, but I have always had a horror of burdening myself with any financial liability, and besides, I had no means with which to furnish the house. Someone must have told the Rajah of this difficulty because I promptly had a communication from him to say that the Residency and its contents would in future be government property. That dispelled of one objection, but for a week or more I hung about Kuching "thinking it over."

The Rajah left me severely alone. I sought advice from others who all said the same thing. "If you refuse the post your career is damned."

At last I ran across the Rajah in the Government Offices. Sternly he addressed me: "I have heard nothing definite from you. I must have an answer within twenty-four hours or I shall make other arrangements."

What could I do? I took the bull by the horns and wrote accepting the post.

The same evening the Rajah came to the Residency and in a most charming manner put most of my doubts at rest. He often used to visit me in the evenings, driving up in his little pony cart whenever the whim took him. He was at heart a desolate old man, living within himself except in matters where the

country was concerned. The human side of his character rarely showed. It was only on these occasions that I ever heard him talk naturally about his family. He had a great regard for his second son, Bertram, the Tuan Muda, and always spoke more about him than either of the others.

During the following six months I was privileged to be in close contact with the Rajah; I learned to appreciate more and more how wrapped up he was in the welfare of his State. He had his finger on the pulse of its existence. Nothing escaped his attention. Morning after morning he came into my office to discuss all that flashed into his head--new orders to be drafted, public works to be instituted, officers to be transferred or promoted, entertainments, thoughtful little acts for the ladies or children of Kuching. Everything had its place in the master brain; and never a written note to aid it.

In his role of autocrat he disliked direct criticism. "So-and-so is a charming man," he used to assert, "he agrees with everything I say." Nevertheless, if one showed hesitation in approving a plan, or maneuvered adroitly enough to present his views from another angle, he would often modify them. In native affairs, however, he was pre-eminent, and it would be a brave man who tried to pit his paltry knowledge against the Rajah's sixty years of experience.

He was not infallible though. Shortly after I became Resident some Malays complained of the high-handed behavior of a certain Haji Isah. The Rajah ordered her arrest and instructed me to deal severely with her because he affirmed she had been turned out of Kalaka years before as a bad character. On investigation I found it was a mistake; it was not the same woman. The Datus approached the Rajah who saw the lady himself, and was still more convinced he was right. We stuck to our point and injustice was averted, but for days afterwards the Rajah was not satisfied in his own mind.

A great characteristic of the Rajah's was his determination to manage his own affairs in Sarawak. Any attempt at interference from high quarters in Singapore or elsewhere was scouted firmly yet courteously. By the terms of the treaty making Sarawak a British Protectorate the Rajah was accorded full freedom in the administration of internal affairs and he jealously guarded this right. He dreaded the gradual penetration of colonial methods which mean too often the substitution of complicated western laws for native customs, and the ousting of natives' rights for the benefit of foreign capitalists.

He never forgot his dignity as Rajah and expected all respect to be paid to him as such. No one ever saw him relaxing his position; he never patronized the Club; he never accepted

hospitality from anyone except on very rare occasions when he might perhaps favor the Bishop or one of the two European members of his Supreme Council.

For some years there was uncertainty in Singapore with regard to his exact official status and the Rajah was hurt when he was not accorded the honors due to a ruling sovereign. In 1889 his position was defined. The Rajah was granted a salute of twenty-one guns from Her Majesty's ships and he was given precedence immediately after the ruling Indian princes.

He kept on good terms with both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Misaions, assisting in every way their efforts towards education, especially among the Chinese, but I am sure he preferred the untamed native to the Christian producta No proselytism among the Mohammedans was countenanced under any pretext. In the beginning of Church enterprise in Sarawak separate spheres of influence had been agreed upon by the two Misaions. Thus the Anglicans limited their activity to the 1st and 2nd Divisions, the Roman Catholics to the 3rd. It was an excellent arrangement because it averted the complications and bickering that might have been caused by overlapping.

The Rajah may not have been a churchman in the literal sense of the word. At one time he was a constant attendant--in a frock-coat and grey topper--but Anglo-Catholic ritual did not appeal to him. The story goes that on one occasion, seeing a procession of choir and clerics advancing up the aisle, he picked up his hat and passed through their ranks out of the church, never to be seen inside again.

When a new Bishop was required for Sarawak the appointment was in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, though the Rajah could, of course, make recommendationsa The Bishop, however, had to possess the Rajah's letters-patent before he could officiate in the State. A trenchant point would have arisen if the Rajah had ever thought it necessary to withhold his authority.

In common with most people the Rajah had a great admiration for the Roman Catholic missionaries who surrendered everything for their faitha who traveled about the country living on rice and salt fish like the natives themselves. Some missionaries seemed to think they had a claim on the Government to help them on their journeys. I sent on one of these applications for a launch to the Rajaha who endorsed the lettera "Tell ... to borrow some other boat, our steamers are too much turned into Bumboats!"

* * * * *

My appointment as Resident also carried with it membership of the Supreme Council and a seat as Judge in the Supreme Court. Those posts put me over the heads of officers who were senior to me in point of service. It hurt me to think there might be heart-burnings.

The Rajah imagined he had circumvented any feeling by constituting what he called a permanent Committee of Administration, including the four Residents of Divisions, and three other principal officers in Kuching, with myself as Chairman and Secretary.

The Committee had no powers, but it was allowed to discuss and recommend upon matters of public interest. At the same time the Supreme Council, led by the Rajah in person, was the highest authority in the State, and it was difficult to see how the Supreme Council and the Committee of Administration could possibly synchronize, especially as members of the former had a seat on the latter.

Administrative Committees are universally of doubtful utility. I am reminded of the boy who asked his father a "What is a committee?" "A committee, my son," replied the parent, "is a body that keeps minutes and wastes hours."

To start with, the Committee of Administration met as ordained, but its scope was very limited. Some new Orders were drafted; every clause in them was argued; each Member had his own views. At times the discussions branched off into matters quite irrelevant to the point at issue. On some occasions a Member would give his vote in Council and then write that on further consideration he withdrew it. It was obviously impossible to collect the outstation members for ordinary meetings, so it transpired that measures affecting the whole country were left to the decision of the Kuching members, some of whom had no experience of conditions outside the capital.

Progress under these circumstances was painfully slow and valuable time was inevitably wasted. However much leisure the other members of the Committee had to give up to wordy discussions I certainly had none.

To explain more fully. At nine o'clock the Rajah arrived at the Government Buildings. For an hour perhaps he would remain in my office giving instructions, discussing affairs, signing papers. No sooner had he departed than it was time to hold Court. In those days practically everything was brought before the Resident. The average was about eight cases per diem, and I was lucky if I could get away by one o'clock. In the afternoon there was a heap of correspondence to tackle, and a continuous stream of persons desiring an interview.

To fit in the necessary number of Committee meetings to achieve any material result meant neglecting a lot of essential tasks. As time went on I confess I let the Committee of Administration slip. I take full blame for this and I realize that other members who would have liked to have made this administrative body a governing factor of the State had a righteous grievance, but I still maintain that the Committee was conceived under a misapprehension, and it was superfluous, because the Rajah was, and always should be, paramount; besides which, there was the Supreme Council of the principal officers of State, native and European, to support his policy.

The fact of my promotion over the heads of others soon righted itself in the good feeling and generous spirit of the officers concerned. Two of them wrote me letters of congratulation, mentioning they were quite satisfied to remain where they were. A third, Reggie Douglas, whose feelings I would not have wounded for anything, came to Kuching, and over a drink at the Club extended to me more than the grasp of good fellowship. He offered me his whole co-operation; he gave me advice, and left me satisfied in my heart with the assurance that I had done right.

From that moment I felt much happier in my position and though I never became really reconciled to an office regime after the freedom of outstation life, there were other compensations in the social sense.

The Rajah liked his principal officers to entertain. I should have loved to have done more in this line, but my resources were not overample. My pay was \$250 a month with an allowance of \$275, or a total salary of £735 a year. I could not afford a pony and drove about in a ricksha. The only motor-car in Kuching then belonged to the Manager of the Borneo Company. As a sign of the times, I was talking recently to a man from Kuching; he told me his car was numbered K106.

At the beginning of 1916 the Rajah brought up the question of my deferred leave again. I was not at all anxious to go with the war looming over everything but the Rajah insisted. My passage home was booked in April.

* * * * *

I had no home to go to; the war had seen to that. I left the ship at Port Said to find my way to Athens where my brother was. It took me a week to get the requisite passports.

Port Said is a poor place at any time. It achieved a certain liveliness during wartime. The streets and hotels were thick with Allied uniforms. Regularly every morning three

German planes sailed over from Palestinet, dropped a bomb and continued their way to Alexandria. Later in the day they re-appeared, laid another egg and returned whence they came. A monitor in the Canal saluted them with shell, but no damage was ever done, though I heard that a donkey lost its life one day.

On the journey between Alexandria and Piraeus we called in at Crete--rugged mountains, sand and aridness. A wild spot I would like to see more of.

At Athens there did not seem to be any war; it had resolved itself into diplomatic intrigues. The representatives of the Allies organized demonstrations. Small boys with Union Jacks and tricolor flags shouted the Greek equivalent for "vive la France" and "God save the King"; they applauded the British and French Ministers when they acknowledged the cheers from their respective balconies.

A day or two later the same little boys bore German flags and shouted themselves hoarse when Baron von Scheneck bowed from his balcony.

On May 31st the Battle of Jutland took place. According to the first Admiralty communique, Athens gathered that the British fleet had sustained a defeat. We English were all somewhat depressed. The following day was King Constantine's fete. A "Te Deum" was held at the Cathedral. We watched the representatives of the Powers go past. The German Minister with his aides in silver-embellished helmets drove along to the cordial cheers of the people. Our British Minister's retinue looked drab if serviceable; it did not evoke any enthusiasm from the crowd. Germany was evidently on top. Whilst the "Te Deum" was in progress King Constantine was informed that the Allies had proclaimed a blockade of Greece. The return State procession was cancelled; the various representatives scuttled back to their Legations. Athens began to wonder if she had backed the right horse.

In the cool of the night everyone assembled at the cafes on the Place de la Constitution to drink and watch the open air cinema. I had found by chance a place that possessed some fine old liqueur whisky the value of which was quite unappreciated by the Athenians. That night there was the sudden sound of an explosion. Cries were raised that the Allies were bombarding the city and panic ensued. Women shrieked, tables and chairs were overturned in the rush to seek shelter. Soon the sound of the guns ceased and a few die-hards sat out the remainder of the night. In the morning we learned that a gasometer outside Athens had blown up. The episode proved, however, that the Greeks were suffering from decidedly jumpy consciences.

The heat in Athens was intense and water was a luxury. We bought our water in quart bottles and no one but Englishmen dreamt of a bath. The populace went to Phalerum on Sundays with cakes of soap and washed itself in the sea.

I used to go to Phalerum to find some coolness. The trams were always crammed. I remember one journey wedged in so tight that I could not move, watching with horrified apprehension a common agile insect meandering among the hairs on my neighbor's neck.

I have said nothing of the Acropolis. Go there when the moon is full and thank God for the ancient Greeks.

I found my way to England at last, after sleeping in a hotel bathroom in Paris and zigzagging across the Channel from Havre. Though uniforms were everywhere and the streets at night were lightless, London was still London. I suffered badly from chilly nights in a coal dump near Vauxhall Bridge doing duty as a Special Constable.

Then I did what every wise man should do, I married the right girl.

CHAPTER XXV

News from Sarawak was disconcerting. The Rajah had been taken ill in October, and so serious was his relapse that two doctors were sent for from Singapore. He recovered sufficiently to travel, and left for home in December. About the same time my wife and I were on the way out. It was a ghastly voyage. Instead of sailing direct we made a detour into the Atlantic, where we encountered the most awful storm one could imagine. Our escort of two destroyers gave it up early and retired. The doors of the deck cabins could not be opened, and food was passed through the ports to the imprisoned inmates. The heavy luggage in our cabin assumed mercurial activity; the only safe spot was on the berth. Fifty military cadets going to India hung on to anything they could grab on deck and intoned "Amen" every time the ship slithered down a watery mountain.

To make matters worse, the holds were full of munitions destined for Japan. In the height of the storm the cargo shifted. It was a terrifying and most uncomfortable list, but the Captain actually seemed pleased about it. He said the Germans would mistake us for a tramp.

When the storm abated, we foregathered in the evenings in a stuffy music saloon with doors closed and the ports sealed with brown paper. We sang "There's a long, long trail" until we became maudlin idiots.

Every day we had boat drill and were strictly enjoined to carry life belts about with us wherever we went. If a hostile submarine was sighted seven blasts on the foghorn was to be the signal to rush to boat stations. One evening off Malta we were at dinner when the hooter started. Life belts were grabbed and palefaced passengers made a dart for the companionway. "Silence!" shouted someone, "count the blasts." One!--two!--three!--four!; at seven we held our breaths, then another blare followed and we knew we were not threatened by a submarine. Afterwards we learned that as the vessel picked her way through a foggy night with all light extinguished, the outline of a French ship suddenly loomed ahead. It was a near thing; there was not a yard between us when she passed. Whether it was the course we took, or the list, luck was evidently with us, for three other ships that had left Gravesend when we did were torpedoed in the Mediterranean. I cannot say what relief I felt when we anchored at last in the Suez Canal.

A huge camp extending along the banks of the Canal from Port Said to Suez; thousands of Tommies trying to find coolness

in the water; trains and motor cars puffing and purring over bare desert were the last signs I saw of the Great War.

East of Suez it was another world.

That voyage from Tilbury to Singapore occupied forty-seven days; the normal time was twenty-eight.

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At Kuching I found a long letter from the Rajah awaiting me, written on the eve of his departure. In spite of his serious illness he was still the autocratic ruler, and his instructions on current affairs were as explicit as ever. Before leaving the country he had delegated a great deal more authority to the Rajah Muda. The letter referred to this: "I shall wish to hear regularly as formerly, but I have much augmented the Rajah Muda's power in the country and political importance. He has now all the correspondence in his hands as well as power of signing documents which were only signed by me before. This will give him much more work and interest in the country." The Rajah's letter ended: "I don't look forward to much pleasure in England. I think I shall soon recover strength as I am now doing, and my one desire is to be in Kuching again for a few months before a final farewell."

His indomitable will took command of every eventuality.

Although the Rajah professed little liking for modern inventions or innovations--for instance he loathed motor cars--he had the foresight to adopt any new contrivance that would materially benefit the country. Directly the war started he saw the advantage of wireless telegraphy to an isolated outpost like Sarawak. A contract was entered into with a French company, steel pylons were erected in Kuching and before the end of 1916 trial messages were exchanged with Singapore and installations linked up the outstations of Sadong, Miri and Sibul. During the remainder of the war period it gave a tremendous sense of security to know that we were in constant communication with Singapore and elsewhere.

The early months of 1917 were clouded by the Rajah Muda's ill health. He left for a trip to Ceylon and it seemed probable that he would have to go home. In accordance with a cable from the Rajah I took over charge of the Administration.

Affairs were running normally in Sarawak; trade was excellent; the war made little impression save a slight increase in the price of commodities and the constant appeal for war charities.

Although the war left us alone, the elements belched thunder and lightning. Never had I seen such a succession of storms.

A giant durian tree stood in front of the Residency with a mass of orchids in a fork of the trunk. During a storm whilst torrential rain was falling, I was astounded to see the thickly intertwined plant burst into flames, ignited by a flash of lightning. On another occasion the policeman guard at my front door was hurled to the ground.

Natives with innate superstition presaged a grave calamity. Sure enough, in April news came that the Rajah was again seriously ill.

The Rajah Muda, who had reached Capetown, countermanded his intended trip to England. He arrived back in Sarawak on May 14th. Four days later--I had just finished tiffin--I was handed a telegram. It was from Sir Arthur Young, Governor of the Straits Settlements, offering his sympathy on the death of the Rajah. It took me by surprise because there had been no official intimation from Sarawak agents in England, but I cannot pretend that the news was altogether unexpected.

When a forest king falls to earth, the vibrations stun our senses for some while after the trunk has lain inert. It is the same when a great man dies; we cannot at first adjust our shaken feelings to the blank he filled. The Rajah was part and parcel of Sarawak. The Keystone was gone. Would the fabric hold together? I went across the river to the Astana. Little groups of men stood about the Government Offices. They had already surmised the worst.

Charles Vyner Brooke came out on the verandah to meet me.

"I have bad news, Rajah," I said.

At the unwonted title he turned red.

"It is all over, then," he whispered, and sank into a chair--silent.

The Committee of Administration had some work to do that afternoon. Telegrams arrived continuously; replies had to be sent. A Proclamation was drafted; a "Gazette Extraordinary" had to be published.

The bells tolled; flags hung half-mast.

Sarawak had lost a loving ruler. I had lost my hero, and a benefactor.

That evening the new Rajah and I walked miles. He did not want to meet anyone else. He courted solitude in his loss; he was shy in his new position.

Later we had further details. The old Rajah was taken ill in London. At his request they bore him to his residence at Chesterton, Cirencester. He traveled there in a motor car, one of the "stinking machines" he so much despised. He died at 12 o'clock noon on the 17th May in his 88th year.

A hundred and one little matters cropped up in the next few days. There were no previous records to establish the formalities that were necessary.

One or two impressions stand out.

My wife gallantly striving to drag the Dead March in Saul out of the Pro-Cathedral's feeble organ-I thought, when too late, how stupid of me not to have suggested the band.

A dreary wet Saturday afternoon when the Government Buildings were eerily silent, going through some of the late Rajah's papers with the Treasurer. A rumor had gained ground that the country was to be divided between the Rajah Muda and his brother Bertram, the Tuan Muda. It was a preposterous idea, for the succession to the Raj had been laid down in Sir James Brooke's will, and the Raj was indivisible.

The new Rajah's whimsical reply when I asked him by what name he proposed to be called: "Thanks! I would rather not be Charles II." So it had to be Vyner, but later he combined both names and was known as Charles Vyner, Rajah of Sarawak.

At a meeting of the Council Negri in 1891 the Rajah had designated his son Vyner as his successor and had enjoined the Members to see that he should be publicly proclaimed Rajah of Sarawak seven days after his death. This ceremony was fixed for May 24th. There was no official precedent to go upon, so I took the matter in my hands and hunted through many publications, until I found the Proclamation read in Singapore announcing the Accession of King George V. This served as a model, and it was adopted with necessary modifications and translated into high-flown Malay. The Proclamation was read from the verandah of the Government Offices on a specially constructed platform. Below were guards of honor of Rangers, Police and Sailors, behind them a motley crowd of many Asiatics. The ceremony was attended by the Rajah himself, and like the rest of his officials, he sat it out bathed in perspiration in a blue serge suit, the only ceremonial garb we knew then.

Following the proclamation, the Rajah spoke in Malay. He was obviously impressed by the occasion, and his well-chosen

words convinced everyone that he intended to carry on the traditional rule of the Brookes. After affirming that he would on no account interfere with the Mohammedan faith, or with any other religions or beliefs of the people, he went on to say: "My people, Rich and Poor, never be afraid if you are in trouble or have anything to complain of. I wish you to tell me so that I can help you; therefore never be afraid to come to me."

As the band played the Anthem and guns boomed in salute, we felt that Charles Vyner was indeed a real successor to his father, and ever afterwards natives from all over the country were not slow to take advantage of his public invitation to gain access to his person.

On the same day a memorial service to the late Rajah was held in the Chapel of St. Michael and St. George, St. Paul's Cathedral. For the first and only time in England, the Sarawak Anthem was played in its entirety by the band of the Honourable Artillery Company. This Anthem, the composition of the gifted Ranee Margaret, impressed everyone with its beauty. It was an appropriate touch that at the same time the Rajah was publicly entering his heritage, well-wishers of Sarawak were gathered in the central fane of the Empire to commend the departed Rajah's soul to his God and to ask a blessing on the new Rajah's endeavors for the good of his State.

Rajah Charles's remains were deposited in a mausoleum to await the termination of the war. For two years the embalmed body reposed in a vault and then it was decided it would be inadvisable for the burial to take place in Sarawak. So Sheepstor, a sleepy village among the tors of Dartmoor, became the Rajah's last resting place. He lies in the little churchyard by the side of James Brooke under a sheltering beech tree. His tomb is a massive rough-hewn grey stone of the moor, firm, strong and imperishable as the memory of the man it covers.

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Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke was forty-three years of age when he succeeded his father. He made no alteration in the routine we had become so used to. He made the daily visit to the Government Offices sheltered by the ragged yellow umbrella. He came to talk with me in my office; he paid a call on the Treasurer and then sat in the late Rajah's seat accessible to anyone who wished to interview him. The Astana was left exactly as it had been in the old Rajah's time. The faded Victorian upholstery, the gimcrack tables and odds and ends remained as they always were.

But the personality of the man was not quite the same.

A native schoolboy told to compose an essay on the history of Sarawak, wrote, "We cannot tell much about our present King because he is still alive!"

The same difficulty presents itself to me. I doubt if anyone really knows the Rajah

Good-looking, clean shaven, a face that suggests the actor; his fair hair now grey; beneath somewhat heavy brows, eyes that are more blue than grey, yet hold the glint of steel that marks a Brooke. Those eyes do not awe like his father's; they have humor in them. I have never seen him in anger; when annoyed he is merely silent. Perhaps that is a fault in an autocrat. His nature is so generous he finds it hard to say "No." I used to wonder what his thoughts were behind the mask, but I never knew.

The Ranee, who should understand him best, has said, "Those who think that they know the Rajah most, in reality are furthest from knowing him at all." Had he not been called upon to rule a country I fancy he would have been more happy living a bohemian life of utmost simplicity with leisure for the hobby of the moment. He is an all-devouring reader, an artistic photographer, and he loves a garden.

With all his antipathy to officialism and the irksomeness of autocracy, he has, I know, a genuine affection for his country. Sarawak can still be a land of freedom for hundreds of thousands of natives so long as there is a Brooke to maintain her independence.

One of the first acts of the Rajah was to send for his brother Bertram, the Tuan Muda. For some years he has been the Rajah's right hand. His winning personality and the knack of doing the right thing at the right moment have made him remarkably popular in the country.

Both the Rajah and Tuan Muda had served England in the war and everything that Sarawak could do to help the Allies was done.

One of the mail boats, the "Rajah of Sarawak," was handed over to the Straits Government, with the consequence that communication between Kuching and Singapore was cut down to three trips a month, and even then we did not always get our mails.

The Rajah lent his yacht "Zahora" to the Admiralty and, fitted with wireless and quick-firing guns, she was more than a year patrolling the innumerable islets of the Mergui Archipelago.

Manpower in Sarawak was likewise heavily drained. The Executive branch of the Government Service normally numbered between forty and fifty. There were now effective for duty in the country only twenty-nine officers. For a territory of 60,000 square miles with widely scattered stations, it left the Administration somewhat severely taxed. Most officers were doing the work of two, but there was no grumbling.

It was my greatest joy in those times to get away with my wife to a little seaside bungalow at Santubong where one could relax and live at ease for a few days.

Santubong with its sentinel mountain guards the western entrance to the Sarawak river. A sequestered spot, because most of the year the bar is not navigable to craft of any size. A tiny Malay fishing village nestles in the mouth of the river; a cluster of brown huts in a grove of coconut palms perilously near to the water's edge, yet sheltered from the sea storms by a jutting headland.

The bungalow faced the sea on a secluded hillock beneath the shadow of Santubong Mountain. The open sea in front was dotted with the conical wooded isles of Satang; in the far distance loomed the faint outlines of Cape Datu and Mount Poit. There were firm sands to walk on, rocks to clamber over and above all a blessed freedom from care, the peace of a lonely sea shore.

Santubong remains one of the few evidences of early Chinese predominance in Borneo. The name itself in the Hokkien dialect means "Mountain of wild pig." Chinese coins dating back to B.C. 600 have been found there, and up a small stream on a large rock, is a rudely carved life-sized figure which probably commemorates some episode of the Hindu occupation of Sarawak.

Majapahit overlordship of Borneo in the early fourteenth century has left some proof in the characteristics of the Land Dyaks. Many of their customs can be traced to Hindu influence.

They are an inland tribe of agriculturists living exclusively in the head waters of the rivers of the 1st Division. In appearance they differ from other people of Sarawak, especially in facial type and the more abundant growth of hair on the face.

Alfred Russel Wallace, the naturalist who visited the Land Dyaks about 1855, ranked them above the Malay in mental capacity, but for generations before James Brooke's arrival they had been oppressed and ground down by the Malays with the most cruel tyranny.

I always regret that my multifarious duties in Kuching left me few opportunities to know more of the Land Dyaks. To

form a true opinion of any natives it is necessary to meet them in their own homes among their own surroundings; if possible, to talk to them in their own language.

The little groups of Land Dyaks I came across in the town appeared to me unprepossessing, shy, and inclined to be stupid.

I ought to have made greater efforts to cultivate their acquaintance because government officers as a rule show a pathetic lack of interest in them and no one that I can remember ever mastered their language.

As a race they are so quiet and unobtrusive that one was apt to forget their existence, but Sarawak has no subjects more loyal or peace~~a~~fula

CHAPTER XXVI

The New Year in Kuching always opened with a Regatta. To the Malays who are wedded to the water from birth the day was the great event of the year. The principal races were for boats unlimited as to size or number of crew. In 1918 Inche Abu Bakar entered a boat named "Ayesshah" that was 108 feet in length and carried 99 paddlers. It came in last every time, the winning boat manned by Dyaks from the 2nd Division being only half the length, with a crew of 54. Natives never seem to grasp the fact that the give and instability of a very long boat counteracts the power of the extra paddles.

The races were over a course of about two miles, and nothing could be prettier or more thrilling than the sight of seven or eight of these racing boats swishing down the river on the tide with the spray flashing in clouds of diamonds from hundreds of paddles. At the beginning of the war it was suggested to suspend the Regatta for the time being, but the Malays pleaded so hard that the year would be unlucky without its traditional opening that it was decided to carry on as usual.

The effect of the war was really very little noticed by the native population. The possibility of a shortage in rice caused some anxiety in official circles and we appointed a Committee of Food & Supply Control. I interviewed all the Chinese rice dealers and it was arranged that the Government should purchase the requisite supply of rice in Singapore, distribute it to the wholesalers who in their turn were allowed to dispose of it at the price regulated by the Committee. The scheme worked quite smoothly but necessitated an entirely new department. The pinch in supplies did not come until the war was all but over and then the Food Control Office had to institute a system of rationing. At no time, though, was there any actual scarcity of necessities and the organization of the Control was most effective, notwithstanding the whole scheme was an entirely new venture and run by officials without any previous experience of such an undertaking. At one period a campaign was started to induce natives to plant substitutes for rice, such as sweet potatoes, tapioca and so on. It takes some time to force Asiatics to view a crisis with any seriousness and for weeks I had a hectic time driving in the point at Malay and Chinese meetings.

I also formulated a project to provide Malays with rice tickets in exchange for "atap," palm-leaf roofing material, and Malay women were given relief for sarongs woven by themselves.

It entailed a lot of extra work in my office, but I flatter myself it did help some necessitous cases. Properly managed I think there would always be a market for good home-woven sarongs in Singapore and elsewhere. The cheap cotton articles so largely imported from Japan are a great menace to the cloth that used to be exclusively woven in all Malay homes. In my time even, girls were not taught to weave as much as they used to. It will be a thousand pities if this distinctive Malay art is allowed to die out in Sarawak for lack of Government support.

When Rajah Charles Brooke succeeded his uncle he took the Oath of Accession before the Council Negri that held its meeting in 1870, two years after his Proclamation. The triennial gathering was due in 1918, so the opportunity was made for the Rajah to be sworn in then.

He was not in very good health and had been obliged to go for a trip to Hong Kong. The Ranee was expected but was obliged to remain in Cape Town owing to illness. The Rajah hurriedly returned in order to join her in South Africa. Luckily more reassuring news of the Ranee's health was received and the journey was cancelled.

The arrangements for the Installation had been temporarily held up but now I was able to set to work on the details of the ceremony. As in the case of the Proclamation there was no precedent to act upon except the form of the oath which had been preserved in the Minutes of the Council Negri. I made inquiries from all the old Malay chiefs I could get hold of; fortunately the aged Datu Bandar and the Datu Temonggong had some recollection of the procedure of fifty years ago. For the first time we heard that the cutlass carried by Sir James Brooke in the actions that won the country from piracy was looked upon as the symbol of sovereignty in Sarawak. The Datus described how the sword should be presented to the newly proclaimed Rajah to be touched and remitted by him in much the same way as the King Emperor acts when the Maharajahs in Durbar offer their swords.

The historic cutlass was discovered after some search in the Astana; its original scabbard had disappeared and a "tapang" wood sheath substituted; its belt was a bit of colored cord.

To make it more presentable a native craftsman fashioned some gold ornamentation and when it was laid on a silken cushion it looked something like a sword of State.

To start with, the Rajah in his retiring manner was shy of any ceremonious function but as time went on he saw that the country expected an occasion out of the ordinary. To add to the

preparations that were now devolving on me it was decided to hold within a day or two of the Installation a big fete in aid of the Red Cross to be known as Kuching "Our Day."

My time was fully occupied with a variety of details. The Church authorities thought that the Rajah ought to be anointed with consecrated oil. I had to point out that Mohammedanism was the established religion of the country. That beyond administering the oath the Anglican Church had no further part in the Installation.

The Datus maintained that they were entitled to wear uniforms of color traditional to their positions. The Datu Bandar was therefore provided with a marvelous red costume adorned with gold lace that made him look like a member of a Red Hungarian dance band. The Datu Temonggong had green with epaulettes. The Datus Hakim and Imaum black and white robes respectively.

Government officials also demanded a uniform. The white Civil Service uniform usual in most tropical countries was adopted and gorgets hurriedly designed in the Sarawak colors of red, black and gold. Even the State umbrella had to have a new dress of yellow silk.

The Ranee arrived in the country in May. It was the first time I had met her. The daughter of the late Viscount Esher, she impresses everyone with her originality and unbounded vivacity. She has many gifts; she paints and sketches; she is also an authoress and has published books under her maiden name, Sylvia Bretto. The glamor of the East attracts her. The Ranee was interested in the preparations for the Installation and fete, much more so than the Rajah. I think in his heart he hated the proceedings.

The whole ceremony was arranged to take place in the big Court Room dominated by the bust of the first Rajah. A dais surmounted by a canopy of gold brocade was erected--I believe they used some of the stuff afterwards to upholster the Astana chairs. A platform was built for Members of Council and the more distinguished guests. Numbered seats in the body of the hall were apportioned to prominent natives and Chinese, and as space was terribly limited, everyone's position had to be mapped out beforehand. To emphasize the right of the people to free access to their Ruler the back of the Throne Room was left for any of the public who could get in.

One hundred picked Dyak warriors, mostly chiefs, in their national costumes, feathers, shields and spears, formed the body-guard in the building. Rangers provided the guard of honor outside. Each man had to be shown exactly what he was to do. The Datus took several days to rehearse their parts.

On July 22nd, from the moment the Rajah and Ranee landed at the Stone Steps and proceeded in slow procession to the Court House through an avenue of masts, flags, and festoons, I have only a vague impression of what took place. I was so intent on seeing that no hitch occurred, I could only breathe with ease as each episode passed off according to plan.

The Rajah, in his green and gold full-dress uniform was more dignified than I have ever seen him. He held the central position without a falter and spoke well. The Ranee was a pleasure to the eye in a mist of pink and lace.

The Dyaks were magnificent; their bronzed bodies and nodding plumes epitomized the romance of Sarawak.

Perhaps the most touching moment was when the aged Datu Bandar, attended by the Datu Temonggong, slowly paced to the foot of the dais. In a loud voice the Datu entrusted the Rajah in the name of the people with the sword of James Brooke as the symbol of the Raj. With a gesture full of assurance the old man raised the cutlass on its golden cushion and the Rajah gently laid his hand on it, accepting the charge.

Then the two principal chiefs of the State retired a few steps and with bowed heads, their hands joined before their faces, gave the salutation of fealty, the Malayan "sembah," which was taken up by all the other Malays in the room; a rumbling accompaniment to the tossing spears and wild war cries of the Dyaks. The culminating point followed, as the Rajah came down from the dais and surrounded by his Council took the oath of Accession.

There were one or two matters I should have liked to have arranged better. The heat in the room was intense for one thing. The public jostling in the background made too much noise. The band was stationed too far away for the strains of the Anthem to be clearly heard.

It was perhaps a pity, too, that no official invitations had been sent to neighboring States, but the Rajah had a somewhat exaggerated idea that the presence of such distinguished guests would involve him in more ceremonious formality than he felt he could cope with.

As it was, the Rajah, none too well in health, was exhausted by the day's events and was unable to attend the banquet that terminated one of Sarawak's most outstanding occasions.

Two days later Kuching made its great effort for the British Red Cross. I found this affair even more fatiguing than the Installation. It was certainly the most ambitious scheme that Kuching had ever embarked upon.

The Museum grounds were requisitioned and every section of the community took its share. Malays willingly gave the materials and free labor to build innumerable sheds. Europeans, Malays, Chinese, Japanese and Hindus provided side shows distinctive of their nationality. Gifts for the stalls came from all over the country. The wife of a Chinese Towkay sent her diamond brooches; an old Dyak woman gave her most prized possession; an ancient brass cooking pot. The organization, headed by the Tuan Muda, worked marvelously; there was not a hitch or a dull moment until dark had fallen.

Over \$11,000 was the result of that one afternoon, the expenses practically nil.

There was solace for my wearied mind and body in the shape of a letter from the Rajah offering congratulations on the smooth working of the arrangements for these two big events.

It may be interesting to record what Sarawak people gave to war charities during the four years of stress. From published figures I find that just over £22,000 was sent to England. For a country with a population of not more than 250 Europeans, it shows how nobly the native element, and particularly the Chinese, responded to the call for help. I may add that the contributions were purely voluntary and given because even the people of the jungle had an inkling that the fate of their freedom was endangered by a terrific cataclysm they could not comprehend, but could only be averted by their united efforts.

By an opportune coincidence, at the very time Sarawak was en fete the German offensive had been repulsed in the second battle of the Marne, and their forces compelled to retire. On the day the Rajah was installed a correspondent could write from the front: "There is not a single German on the south bank of the Marne; or rather not a living German."

Nowhere was the news more gladly welcomed than in Sarawak. The future was pregnant with hope; we anticipated good times to come.

After the excitements of July there was a general lull, so my wife and I took the opportunity of going to Singapore. The baby went too.

Our intentions were twofold. My wife wanted to find a nurse. I thought I should get some rest. My hopes came to naught at the outset.

It is a strange thing that small children who are as good as gold at home develop into little devils when you take them away from their natural habitat. Raymond turned night into day

in that Singapore hotel. Of course, poor mite, he had a tummy-ache and he could not realize how his conscious-stricken parents perambulated hours of darkness vainly striving to still the tantrums, lest the inmates of the building should rise with murder in their hearts. And in the daytime, when he could have raised hell with little consequence to anyone, he slept with the peace of a seraph on his baby face.

We had more luck with the nurse. We engaged one of those peculiar wooden-faced sexless women, a Chinese amah. She was really more like a robot than a human being but she knew her job. Hidden somewhere she must have had a heart and some affection for her charge.

When the family went to England Ah Lan went also. She took the journey into the absolute unknown as calmly as she might go for a ricksha ride. She could not have been very happy in the "red-haired devils" country, but she carried on imperturbably. It was cold and she wore many overcoatst Small urchins in the streets made fun at the trousers she refused to discard. The food was not what she had been used to.

Once on Worthing front she spied a fellow amah. The two stranded compatriots flew into each other's arms, the sea-air resounded with shrill clipped Chinese gibberish. A delighted crowd collected, harassed policemen held the ring. The exhibition only ceased when their powers of articulation were exhausted. They separated and shouted messages of parting from one end of the parade to the other.

Yes! I am sure Ah Lan had some human feelings, for after she had left us a parcel arrived from some remote country; it contained a gold ring and a pair of embroidered slippers for Raymond.

Whilst in Singapore we were invited to witness the fire walking in the temple of Mariamne.

Our seats were on a balcony overlooking the temple courtyard. A trench some fifty feet long by twenty wide was filled with smoldering cinderst We could feel the heat rising from where we sat. All round was a dense crowd of Tamils in holiday mood, the women in their brightest garbt Some old men raked the cinders and acrid smoke filled our nostrils. Outside the temple we could hear the sound of tom-toms and the chanting and howling of a throng. We were told these were the devotees who were to purify themselves of their sins by going through the fire. When all was ready the gates were opened and a mob of men surged in. Most were naked save for a loin cloth; garlands of marigolds hung round their necks; many had turned their bodies into pin cushions, others had knives piercing their cheeks. All of them were wild-eyed, hysterical and dancing.

Without a moment's hesitation they stepped into the bed of hot ashes. Not a soul showed the slightest inconvenience; many made a point of sauntering along the trench; some danced through it with small children perched on their shoulders.

The spectators seemed to take the performance as a matter of course. To me it is a veritable mystery how these fanatics can walk over a long stretch of fiercely hot cinders with naked feet, without sustaining any hurt whatever. Is the skin of the sole so tough that they feel nothing? Is it faith that carries the devotees through? Or, are they drugged?

Soon after our return to Kuching we began to hear rumors that the Germans were on the point of collapse, so when it came, the news of the Armistice was not wholly unexpected.

The actual official intimation was notified to me by telephone from the Telegraph Station at 5 a.m. on November 12th. I have reason to remember it, because I was kept ages in the chilly dawn taking down the lengthy details of the armistice terms.

As soon as I could I informed the Rajah, who, with the Tuan Muda, was inclined at first to think it no real peace and scarcely a matter for rejoicing. As it turned out, they were right; the armistice and the long drawn-out peace negotiations were a sorry termination to the four years of bloodshed. However, a public holiday was proclaimed; the Chinese exploded all the crackers that could be found and everyone who had a flag hung it out. That night Kuching was brilliant with Chinese lanterns, torchlight processions and illuminations. The War was over! No one had any concern for the future now. The world would be a peace; prosperity was assured; the millenium had begun! Thank God! The War was over!

CHAPTER XXVII

The New Year arrived with a world at peace, a joyful distinction to the four preceding years. Sarawak looked forward to a period of quiet development. All our happy anticipations for 1919 were soon shattered by a bombshell in the shape of a communication from Singapore that rice was scarce and our supplies would have to be curtailed.

Sarawak should be able to provide all the rice necessary for its own consumption--the land and the planters are there. But up to this time there had been no incentive to Dyaks to plant more paddy than they required themselves. There was little sale for the home-grown grain because the town-dwellers, Malays and Chinese, had become accustomed to, and preferred, the imported Siam rice.

To add to our difficulties the price of commodities soared to an unprecedented height. The ordinary market prices for fowls, fish, or vegetables increased by at least fifty per cent, and tinned goods, groceries, and such like cost more than double than they did in 1915.

Up to the end of 1921 the Committee of Food and Supply Control had to exercise complete command in the matter of food distribution.

The Government purchased all supplies of rice and even chartered vessels to transport cargoes of grain from as far off as Saigon. A system of food cards for the people had to be introduced in the larger towns, but it was all managed so effectively by the Committee that no one suffered very much.

An interesting point was that the consumption of imported rice gradually fell by nearly seventy-five per cent, due in part to the high price and consequent reduction in rations amongst the poor who undoubtedly took to eating substitutes such as sago or tapioca, and in part to the increased production of local rice. The loss incurred by the Government in these food transactions, including charity doles and cheap rations to Government employees was in the region of \$150,000. Sarawak was, nevertheless, in such a firm financial condition that the Rajah was able to make a gift to the British Government of £5,000. annually for six years towards alleviation of the war debt.

A good deal was said about Chinese coolies suffering from starvation. It alarmed me because it was reported from

Upper Sarawak that hundreds of men who had been turned out of work from pepper and rubber gardens had nothing to subsist on and were becoming a menace to the country. Relief work, road making and such like, was arranged for them. Instead of the expected hundreds, only eighty-eight seedy looking coolies turned up. They were offered free rations, free quarters and pocket money in return for some light leveling work. None of them did more than a few hours labor, their complaint being that they were rubber tappers and could not stand digging. Within a day or two they dwindled back to their old haunts, and I heard nothing further about starving coolies.

Chinese immigrants in the far Eastern states require very careful supervision. They are industrious and the mainstay of every commercial or agricultural enterprise. Without their activities Malaya would be an undeveloped country, but behind their imperturbable character, their plodding disposition, they have an insatiable love for secret societies which are nominally instituted for benevolent purposes, but which actually bind their members to anarchical principles.

Sarawak suffered one disastrous upheaval, in 1857, when the Chinese gold miners of Upper Sarawak, instigated by the Triad Society of China, suddenly swept down on Kuching at midnight.

Rajah Sir James Brooke, roused from his sleep, saw the Chinese landing on the banks of a stream above his house. One of his officers, Nicholetts, was murdered there before his eyes. Defense was out of the question. Rushing out of an unguarded bathroom door, the Rajah reached the stream unnoticed, dived under the Chinese boats and lay hidden on the bank of the opposite shore until he recovered strength to gain the house of a Malay. Meanwhile, the rebels attacked other European bungalows, and that night three Englishmen and four children were brutally murdered.

Mrs. Middleton, wife of the Inspector of Police, took refuge in a large water jar and heard the shrieks of her two boys as the Chinese took their lives.

Mrs. Crookshank, though desperately wounded, escaped by shamming death, while ruffians tore her rings from her fingers.

When morning broke, the Chinese were in complete command of the town. A day later their main body retired up river, though Kuching was still held in force.

The Tuan Muda, Charles Brooke, received news of the insurrection while at Skrang and hastily got together a force of Dyaks to rescue his uncle. They found the Rajah at the mouth

of the Sarawak river with some Malays. That evening the steamer "Sir James Brooke" arrived, providentially, from Singapore, whereupon the small force sailed up-river and the Chinese retreated. Up to the Dutch border the Dyaks pursued the rebels and over a thousand are said to have been killed.

The Chinese in Sarawak never forgot that lesson, and yet the police have to keep a wary eye for recrudescences of the secret society peril.

Throughout the Malay Peninsula and in Sarawak there are numbers of Chinese who have never seen China. They have been born, nurtured and educated in an adopted land; their whole outlook on life has become Anglicized; Malaya knows them as loyal subjects. They are not likely to cause trouble. But the constant stream of "Sinkees," or newcomers, seeking occupation on plantations and mines, are still imbued with the institutions of their own country.

Secret societies are forbidden by severe laws, but another insidious evil--Communism--is a greater danger. Communism, with principles allied to the most rabid secret society, has gathered many adherents in China; the nature and intellect of the Chinese further its aims; its protagonists will see that it is spread wherever there are folk ready to imbibe the poison. Unless close watch is kept, Chinese anarchism may yet prove a grave menace to the civilization of Malaya.

However depressing the outlook it was an understood thing that the Kuching social circle must whirl on its sophisticated way. Tennis, golf, dinner parties and bridge. There is a peculiar atmosphere of forced gaiety that pervades the evening entertainments of a small Sarawakian community, and a boring lack of variety. The same people you have met in the course of the day, or, later on, treated to "Stengahs" in the Club, you greet again at a dinner party.

As ninety per cent of the guests are of the class known as "Government," and precedence is an inviolable law of the East, I suppose it is inevitable that there is little scope for diversity in the disposal of the company. Now, however charming a lady may be, there is a limit to bright conversation after you have sat next to her times without number.

I certainly must have been particularly dull company. I envy those gifted persons who are never at a loss to keep their tongues wagging about nothing. For me, it was impossible to chatter about what the Government had done, or was going to do.

It was no use discussing home politics culled from papers a month old. No one out East seems to care a jot about home affairs--they are safely insulated 8000 miles away.

Early in my career I learned that it was most unwise for a Resident to gossip, or listen to tittle-tattle about others. What was there left? I am inclined to think that Asiatics manage things better; at their dinner parties you are expected to eat and not waste time in talking.

It was not only the same people that were met night after night, it was the same food as well. Cookie might promise to provide something out of the ordinary, but when the feast appeared on the table there was no difficulty in recognizing its origin. There was the curry soup that the cookie belonging to the Commissioner of Police made so well; prawns in aspic, the chef d'œuvre of the Principal Medical Officer's man; the salmi of duck was the product of your own kitchen, but the Neapolitan ice came from the Vicarage. It is as well to remember that the fraternity of Chinese cooks is an association more predominant even than a Trade Union.

All the same, there is much to be admired about the Chinese cookiet. He has no range with a series of dampers; no gas stove with automatic regulating device. He throws a bundle of sticks onto a brick ledge, and bakes, roasts, and boils to perfection, in an old kerosene oil tin with the cover knocked off.

Housekeeping in the East has its drawbacks, though the servant problem is not so acute as in England. Many bachelors think they escape domestic cares by paying their cooks a contract price--so much per head per diem. Cookie likes that system; he has a set menu, buys cheaply and pockets the difference. The better, but more tiresome method, is to take the cook's account each day. You laboriously check each item of the bill of fare, and add up the column of cents. It leads to heated discussions, but cookie invariably comes off best, and you must harden your heart to the fact that on every cent he spends in the bazaar, he takes a fraction as his commission. In the long run, though you do get some value for your money.

Incidentally, there is an iniquitous custom out East of paying for everything by "chits." No European dreams of carrying money in his pocket and rarely has any in his bungalow. Every small purchase he makes, every drink he has in the Club, is signed for on a slip of paper. At the end of the month packs of chits arrive from forgotten sources and the monthly salary disappears like snow before a thaw. The system has done more than gambling or reckless living to involve youth in debt. It is so simple to sign a chit; so easy to lose count of them; it is not nearly so easy to find the cash when the bits of paper come home.

Whilst we in Kuching were fighting food shortage and pretending that all was well, the Powers in Paris were evolving the elaborate Peace Terms.

The negotiations dragged on so wearily that all interest in the ultimate issue had evaporated by the time the Treaty was signed on June 28th, 1919. Most people privately agreed that demobilization had come too soon, and in their hearts, devoutly wished it had been possible to force the vanquished to definite terms by military force a year earlier.

Whatever slight grounds there were for rejoicing, Sarawak could not very well stand out when this questionable peace was being celebrated everywhere else. To complicate matters, the Chinese started a vehement anti-Japanese campaign to show their disapproval of the non-withdrawal of Japan from Kiaw Chow. In Sarawak there were no actual disturbances but the Chinese notified me that they would have nothing to do with the Peace celebrations.

As time went on the close-bound life of the Resident's office worked on my nerves. I missed the varied interests of the outstations where there was at least freedom of action and a comforting sense of pre-eminence.

I fancy most people have a fairly accurate consciousness of their own faults, though they may not have the will to check them. It seems to me I grew to be too sensitive, over-conscientious, inclined to be moody and peevish. At one time I had a certain sense of humor, but that withered in the monotony of daily routine, and left me at the mercy of petty worries.

The natives of Sarawak may be envied, for they can have little to worry about. No doubt they experience some anxiety with regard to the weather when they are preparing their paddy farms; some concern when rats, birds or tempests ruin their crops, yet destitution never stares them in the face. They have to work healthily for their livelihood, but money is not necessary for their existence. The land is free to them; they can build their homes with material cut from the jungle nearby. They mate as nature originally ordained and beget children who are a welcome asset to them.

Contrast that with some of the problems that assail civilization--unemployment, bare means of subsistence, starvation, ill-assorted marriages and birth control. When in time "Progress" forces the native out of his natural state of existence, he, too, will find that life has unsuspected worries.

It is said that the competent man does not worry. I doubt if that is true. The man who comes through best usually has a gift of humor to buoy him up in his periods of mental anxiety.

The Civil Service officers I have met can be classed generally in three categories--the over-conscientious, the indifferent, and the over-bearing. The first mean well, do too much and consequently are rather a nuisance. The second do little, but get on because they make few mistakes and give no trouble. The third are as impossible as the inefficient. The officer who never goes too far and never does too little is a rara avis.

A new era had already appeared in Sarawak, though the fact had not impressed itself on us to any great extent. In 1909 the Rajah had granted a concession to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company to exploit the oil resources of Sarawak. About the end of 1910 oil was struck at Miri to the extent of four tons a day. From this small beginning the production of oil in 1914 rose to some 65,000 tons, and during the war 150,000 tons of liquid fuel was supplied to the British and Japanese Navies. Since then there has been a steady increase. In 1923, the year I left Sarawak, the output was over 550,000 tons.

Miri itself has grown from a small village to a flourishing community of over 200 Europeans and some thousands of Chinese and Malay workers. The country naturally profited from the royalties on the output, but it was some time before anyone realized that this budding oilfield, potentially the second largest in the British Empire, was to bring Sarawak, hitherto so shy of publicity, into the limelight of the world.

Whilst the State was progressing slowly on its own merits under the Brooke rule, its internal freedom guaranteed by the British Crown in 1888 was its charter of independence. People are now asking: can the country continue to go its own way with its possibilities for the future, its unbounded resources of a product so vital to naval supremacy in the Far East?

Hints and rumors of a possible disregard of Sarawak independence have emanated from various sources. The Treaty of 1888 by which Sarawak became an independent Protected State emphasized the point by placing its affairs under the aegis of the Foreign Office. After the absorption of Brunei into the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak interests were transferred to the Colonial Office, and the British Consular officer who had acted as intermediary was withdrawn and his functions assumed by the Governor of the Straits Settlements as British Agent for Sarawak. Like a straw in the wind some saw an indication of future British policy in this move.

No one imagines that the Colonial Office will appropriate direct administration of the State unless the unthinkable should happen, and the Brooke family relinquish the charge the people of Sarawak have entrusted them with.

9. As in the case of all references to the present throughout this work, when the author says "now" he means 1934.

In 1866 when Sir James Brooke was distracted by lack of funds, worry and illness, he offered the country to the English Government for a sum of £75,000--it was refused. Less than seventy years have passed since then; the revenue of the State, risen to about £500,000, exceeds the expenditure; there is no Public Debt; and financially and politically the country is firmly established.

Sarawak is not yet a Colonial Possession, still its mineral products, petroleum and coal, are wanted for the use of the Empire. The sentiment of the country is wholly Imperial, for the Rajah, although a ruling sovereign, is at the same time a British subject. Dependent on British Protection the resources of the State naturally would always be available for the needs of the Empire. The danger to Sarawak independence, as some see it, is the possibility that outside influence may be exercised to sway internal affairs, in order to preserve a tightening grip on its essential products. Suggestions as to policy from a powerful authority, although at variance to the country's traditional methods, would be difficult for a small State to disregard.

In time "peaceful penetration" of this nature would rob Sarawak of her internal independence and transform her into a virtual British Colony. The late Rajah fought all his life against interference. It would be the very acme of irony if the valuable discovery he set so much store by should tend to subvert the freedom of Sarawak.

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The Rajah who had been in England returned to Sarawak in February 1920, and I was granted furlough. Transport was not easy to find at that time, but I managed to sneak a passage in a German liner flying the French flag. She was a beautiful ship, originally built for the Hamburg-South American run. All her appointments were on the luxurious scale expected by South American millionaires; there was even a small iron safe for their jewelry in every cabin.

The passengers, however, were not so classy as the ship. There were only five English among a crowd of French colonists from Indo-China, the majority of whom had been segregated there since the beginning of the war. It was a dull ship; there was little to do but sit and read. In the evenings the smoking room was packed with fat women in cotton blousy frocks, and men in drill suits begrimed with Cochin China dirt. They made a lot of fuss over dominoes, and drank gallons of bock. The few young girls were carefully chaperoned. Flirtation of any sort was frowned on.

One fellow rashly spoke to a girl on the sly. Maman met him on the upper deck and smothered him with Gallic curses. Papa saw him afterwards on the main deck and clinched the matter by kicking him in the stomach. We hoped there would be a fight, but Lothario only vomited over the side, and retired to his cabin for the rest of the voyage.

There was no necessity to queue up for the morning tub; the bathrooms were disengaged, except on Sunday. On the other hand the private offices where one expects some distinction of sex, were embarrassingly public.

Spring was in the air when we reached Marseilles. Marseilles must evoke more memories than any other port in the world. When the exiles come home with more cash than clothes, it is the beginning of a long looked for holiday. Who has not recollections of the hotel with its glass-roofed lounge, and the first European lunch in the dining room gaudy with mirrors and gilt? And then, when the cash has gone and nothing is left but clothes, that final drive to the "quai" over bumpy "pavé" and villainous pot holes.

Marseilles has our smiles and hopes when we come home; she takes our sighs and heartaches as the ship sails East again.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I returned to Kuching towards the end of 1920. There was a difference somehow; the enthusiasm I had always felt in my work was waning. I cannot exactly explain it. It may have been that my sensitive nature was affected by the feeling of uncertainty that seemed to pervade the Service, caught up by the undercurrent of restlessness that was the reaction that followed the horrors of war.

It was inevitable that with a new regime there should be some doubt as to the Rajah's future policy. Would he continue to let the country advance slowly step by step in the traditional manner, or, were the old tried methods to disappear and "progress" to hasten forward?

There were adherents of both schools of thought in the Administration, and there was a clash of opinions very strange to those who had never contemplated any deviation from the iron-bound principles of the late Rajah.

Our new Rajah, however, said nothing; he was satisfied to let matters take their own course; he probably realized that Sarawak, like the rest of the world at this time, was in a state of transition that no human agency could check.

A good deal of the unrest in the Service was due to the increased cost of living and inadequate pay. The Rajah took the subject in hand and brought into force a scale of emoluments that was generous beyond expectations, but even then there were some who were dissatisfied.

The League of Nations was a new institution that was looked upon with suspicion, although it was powerful enough, in all conscience, to claim the respectful attention of every nation. Its aims were not confined to the promotion of the peace of the world. Its ideal was evidently to make a new heaven of the earth. A lot of work fell on my office with the statistics and ordinance required for the suppression of opium and deleterious drugs. How far the League would move towards the crushing of dubious vices was the cause of much apprehension throughout Malaya.

Opium, gambling and spirit traffic had always been under Government control; more effectively so than in European countries, and the money derived from these sources was an appreciable portion of the revenue of the Malayan States. If Exeter

Hall was going to influence the League to legislate against Chinese gratifications, while they could not suppress indulgence at home, it looked like financial ruin for some of the smaller countries.

The Rajah was again in England when I returned to Sarawak and in conjunction with G. C. Gillan, the Treasurer, I acted as His Highness' Deputy.

We had some interesting visitors that year. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Lorraine, actor and airman, paid us a call during his tour of the world. I remember a dinner at the Residency at which he was a guest. After the meal, as the men sat finishing their wine, two white rabbits, pets of my small son, escaped into the room and ran under the table.

"Confound itt" I said, "There are those rabbits again." An appalling hush fell on everyone; some looked at me askance.

I was completely nonplused for the moment. Then I heard a man whisper to his neighbor, "Do you think they are pink?"

A "boy" dragged the offenders out and my reputation was restored.

At Robert Lorraine's instigation we tried to mesmerize a chicken by the old method of a chalk line on the drawing room floort We found, however, that a Dyak "manok" had not the psychic possibilities of a common barnyard hen, and it showed its contempt of the proceedings in other "fowl" ways.

Mr. Somerset Maugham, the author and playwright, also came on a visit. He was said to be looking for "copy." He certainly found it in a manner he had not bargained for.

Whilst returning from a trip to Simanggang, by some inexplicable mischance the policeman in charge of his boat failed to take shelter from the approaching tide, and in about the most dangerous part of the river, they ran into the bore, a roaring wave at least eight feet high.

The boat was instantly overwhelmed, and the occupants precipitated into the water. For nearly half an hour Somerset Maugham and the rest were whirled along with the tide, tossed and buffeted by the surging water, desperately clinging to the boat which turned over and over with the action of the current. At last, helped by some of the crew, Maugham managed to reach the bank utterly exhausted. Dyaks took the shipwrecked party into their house, revived them with drink and provided them with sarongs.

Luckily all escaped injury, but English literature nearly lost one of its most brilliant writers that day.

In conversation with Somerset Maugham I suggested that the history of Sir James Brooke would make a good film story. He said no; there was no love interest in the first Rajah's life.

That is not entirely correct.

Spenser St. John, in his Life of Sir James Brooke, relates: "About this time [1835, when Brooke was thirty-two], he passed through that ordeal which punishes most men--he fell in love and became engaged. What were the causes which induced the lady or her family to break off the engagement I do not know, but it was broken off, and Mr. Brooke appeared to look upon it as final; and he, from that time, seems to have withdrawn from all female blandishments. He never spoke of it to us though an occasional allusion made us think that his thoughts often reverted to this episode in his history."

There was a story extant in Sarawak that the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts had a great attachment for Sir James. They met in Torquay in 1858, when the Rajah came home broken down with the injustice shown him by public opinion, and in despair at the financial ruin he was facing in Sarawaka

The country owes a deep debt of gratitude to this lady. It was Miss Burdett-Coutts' esteem for the Rajah that saved Sarawaka

She relieved him of a crushing debt by a loan free of interest. She advanced the money to buy him a steamer which he called "Rainbow"--the emblem of hope. In addition, near to Kuching, she established a farm and garden designed to train natives in agriculture, the remains of which, on the Pending road, were still evident in my time.

The Rajah, on his part, made provision in his will whereby if he died in default of any immediate heir, he entrusted the Baroness to take measures to retain Sarawak as a British possession.

Some publicity has been given recently to the theory that the wounds received by James Brooke when serving with the East India Company's army in the Burmese war of 1825 precluded any possibility of his marrying.¹⁰ What evidence there is for this

10a Since this was written, research by Emily Hahn has revealed that James Brooke in fact had an illegitimate son whose

supposition has not been brought to light. We are told he was shot in the lungs and cured himself of incipient constumption by drastically taking an ice cold bath every morning through a severe winter.

That little episode gives some indication of the first Rajah's strength of purpose.

Among our official visitors was the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Laurence Guillemard. I could not house this guest and his staff at the Residency, so permission had to be obtained from the Rajah in England to open up the Astana, and I dashed backwards and forwards between the palace and my house.

The Sarawak custom of having two Rajah's Deputies made things a little awkward on occasions like this. At the official dinner to His Excellency we got over the difficulty of the toast list by arranging for the Governor to propose the health of the Rajah, then Gillan from one end of the table gave "the King," and I followed from the other end with a welcome to Sir Laurence.

In the middle of dinner one of the Governor's Secretaries suddenly disappeared under the table. The legs of his chair, riddled with white ants, gave way, and he subsided so quietly it seemed like a well-performed vanishing trick. I fancy he was somewhat annoyed, but he emerged as debonair as ever, eye-glass and gardenia immaculately correct.

The etiquette observed by a Colonial Court is sometimes rather confusing to the uninitiated. For instance, the ladies who are to have the honor of feeding with His Excellency are marshaled in line. A.D.C.'s and Secretaries produce the great man, who is presented to each lady, though they may already have met several times. The last lady in the row takes His Excellency's arm and the procession goes into dinner.

When the A.D.C.'s and Secretaries think it is time for the King's Representative to retire, they march him off to bed. I heard one Governor ask if he might stay up a little longer, but the Staff was inexorable. Poor Governors, they have a rotten time. One told me he had not had a quiet meal with his wife for two years, and his A.D.C.'s always dumped people on him that he had not the slightest desire to talk to.

existence led to strained relations between the Rajah and the then heir apparent, Captain Brooke Johnson. See Emily Hahn, James Brooke of Sarawak (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1953), pp. 223-229t

Sarawak lost her principal Native Officer, the Datu Bandar, about this time. The old Malay was eighty years old when he decided to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and his wife, Dayang Sahadah, only four years his junior, insisted on accompanying him. Both died within two days of each other in the spot most hallowed by Islam.

The Datu was a true type of a courtly Malay gentleman, intensely loyal to his rulers. The Dayang was a simple dear old lady. Before they sailed on their last mission, the old couple came to the Residency. They talked of the joy they anticipated in seeing Mohammed's sacred city. If they could die there, they said, it would be better than anything, because then they would pass straight to Heaven.

Dayang Sahadah produced a battered tin biscuit box and asked me to keep it during her absence; it contained all her jewelry--gold brooches, bracelets and earrings. I demurred, but she pressed it on me, saying she did not trust her own family. I was touched at the faith she showed in the probity of the white man; I was still more moved when she took my hand and raising it to her forehead gave me her blessing and adieu.

As an indication of the size of Malayan families, I may mention the Datu and Dayang had thirteen children, and lived to see fifty-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grandchildren.

The Rajah came out to preside over the twentieth meeting of the Council Negri in 1921. In his address the Rajah followed his father's lead and exhorted the members to use their influence to encourage the people to plant paddy, sago and pepper, the foundations of the trade of Sarawak. He also mentioned the necessity for more roads. This statement aroused an old controversy. There was certainly food for reflection in the views of a writer in the "Sarawak Gazette."

"Malays," he wrote, "will never leave the river sides and it is difficult to see how Dyaks can be induced to leave their homes to live along a high road in the pursuit of agriculture. Sarawak is a very sparsely populated country, and high roads, unless an incentive to agriculture, are useless. We have no agricultural or industrial centres which need high roads or communications. The many rivers will always be the natural highways of Sarawak as they always have been."

I was personally a strong advocate in favor of more roads because I felt sure the day would come when motor traffic would require ways of approach to the interior, and to a great extent, supersede the laborious and protracted communication by water; but I did not, as some imagined, take any part in the anonymous paper argument on the subject.

Ten years or so have passed since then, and I read that road making is in progress in Sarawak, and the motor highways are rapidly becoming the normal means of reaching the interior.

Whilst the Rajah was in the country he readily agreed to a scheme to revive the pony races which had lapsed for various causes in the past seven years. Australian griffins cost too much, and as hacks were unsatisfactory in most of the outstations, arrangements were made to import native-bred ponies from North Borneo.

The year 1922 was a lucky one for me.

I started by having a share in a boat named "Sri Melawan" which won the Champion Cup in the Kuching Regatta. It was built in my old district, the Batang Lupar, and carried fifty-two Dyak paddlers.

I followed that up by drawing the second horse, Tamar, in the Club Derby Sweep. A curious thing happened in this sweep. The number drawing Tamar was read out as 806, which had nothing to do with me. Some observant person remarked that 806 had already been drawn, so all the numbers were checked through; then it was found that the Tamar ticket had been read upside down, and it was 908 which was definitely mine. Had it not been for that observant person I might have lost between £70 and £80.

When the ponies arrived from North Borneo they were apportioned by lot among the subscribers. I drew No. 15, a light roan standing 12-2. I called him Billy Buster, and in the two Race Meetings that remained for me in Sarawak, he won five races, and was second once out of the six he ran. In some of the races he was handicapped to carry 11 st. 7 lbs. over a three-furlong course, an appalling weight for a tiny pony, and he never carried less than 11 stone, even round the race course.

We had a trial one day to see in what time Billy Buster could do the three furlongs if pressed. He did it in 48 seconds with 10 st. 7 lbs. up. That time has been beaten since, but of late years the course has been vastly improved.

Billy Buster had a peculiar temperament, sluggish unless under urge, yet extremely sensitive. He knew to the day when races were to take place. He would wander aimlessly round and round his box the night before, sweating with nervousness.

I sold the pony to the Rajah when I left, the afterwards he only won a single race, and that a consolation prize. I have often thought he missed his syce, a man who I believe was an arrant scoundrel, but I liked him because he loved Billy

Buster, and could do anything he wanted with him. When the races came on, I often found the syce staying the night in the stable soothing the agitated animal, and every time, before the pony was brought on to the course, he would take its head under his arm and whisper into its ear, and Billy Buster seemed to understand. Those two Meetings in the Autumn of 1922, and the Spring of 1923, were the only occasions I ever made money on a race course.

The great event of 1922 was the visit of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales to Malaya, following on an unfortunately timed tour of India, then in the first throes of the sedition we seem to expect nowadays.

To signalize the royal visit the opportunity was taken to hold a Malaya-Borneo Exhibition in Singapore that would, at the same time, bring about a rapprochement between the various States, and enable the people to exchange ideas and to see each other's craftmanship. Sarawak got together a remarkable show, not only a splendid collection of curios, arts and crafts for the Prince's edification, but a picked body of 250 Dyak and Kayan warriors, and the band of the Sarawak Rangers.

We were afraid that the Rajah's pet aversion to official ceremonies would make him shy of taking part in the Prince's reception. I had letters from influential persons in Singapore urging the necessity of the Rajah's attendance. The Raneé on her way home, wrote that the absence of the Rajah would be a calamity because he was specially mentioned in the Address to the Prince as being present to give him welcome.

All the time I believe the Rajah never had any other intention but to be present, though the question of uniform bothered him considerably.

The Treasurer and I were bold enough to get permission to accompany him.

Singapore was in a hectic state of festivity for five days--official reception, dinners, balls, races, Chinese processions and illuminations.

The Prince went through it all with his usual adaptability, though his nerves must have been strained by the trying circumstances of the Indian tour.

The ball at Government House was simply a crush. We were told first of all to wear white kid gloves and how to conduct ourselves when presented to His Royal Highness. Then they decided that it would be too strenuous for the Prince and washed out the kid gloves and the handshakes.

We crowded into the ballroom, and when the scene was set, watched with glee two of the Secretaries heralding the royal procession, gingerly mincing backwards along the polished floor.

The Prince and the very select company, among them the Rajah, emerged two by two. The Rajah, catching sight of us squeezed together in a corner, tried to cut out of the procession, but Seton James, the Colonial Secretary, frustrated this move, and we heard him loudly expostulating: "Now then, Brooke, come here; where are you off to?"

The rest of the evening was spent by a horde of thirsty men endeavoring to force their way into a side room where the lucky ones got their liquid reward.

A matter that had worried me ever since my appointment as Resident was the indefinite procedure of the Courts in Sarawak. We were working on a sketchy code drawn up by the late Rajah in 1870, which left almost every case to be settled by the Residents. What was possible in 1870 had become an intolerable burden in 1922.

The Rajah saw the point, and Mr. W.W.D. Skrine, a lawyer who had seen service in Sarawak, was good enough to draw up the groundwork for a new constitution of the Courts of Law.

I was anxious not to elaborate anything prolix, or to interfere unduly with the traditional administration of justice in the State which had, wherever possible, incorporated the many excellent customs of the people. Common sense is of more value in dealing with Asiatics than legal nicety.

The new Courts Order was eventually issued after months of careful thought. It did not pretend to be a furbished code of law; it was meant to serve as a guide to co-ordinate the Courts throughout the country, and to define the jurisdiction of magistrates. It certainly took a load of needless work from the shoulders of the higher officials, and if the new regulations made it easier to administer justice, they served their purpose.

The old Rajah used to say there was nothing more simple than to impose a code of Western laws on submissive natives--but for what purpose?

For hundreds of years we have been devising, elaborating, and amending our law, so that the most intelligent person has to spend large sums of money to hire professionals to unravel its intricacies. If we are puzzled by legal quibbles, an untutored native is simply bewildered by them.

Our legal experts define justice as it is put down in black and white. I honestly think justice has been better achieved in Sarawak by the innate common sense of right minded English gentlemen. The truth of the matter is that whenever Englishmen plant themselves down to exploit a land, however remotely shadowed by the Union Jack, the "Civis Britannicus sum" attitude is adopted and before long English law is introduced to satisfy them, without much consideration to the characteristics or customs of the native heirs to the country.

Sooner or later Sarawak will find herself enmeshed in a wonderfully worded code that none of her subjects will understand, and the saying we used to be rather proud of, that "Sarawak is the home of much justice and little law" will have to pass into oblivion.

That new Courts Order was my swan-song.

I began to feel an overpowering desire to settle down "at home." I fancy everyone out East has the longing at one time or another. It comes to life in daydreams. There is only one "home" for an exile; it cannot be made anywhere--it lies across the seas in all his thoughts and hopes.

I sent in my request to be allowed to retire. It was a wrench to do so after twenty-four years in a country I was devoted to. All the same I think I was right. I had held the chief executive post for nearly eight years and in that period ideas become set. In every undertaking fresh blood infuses a new spirit, so necessary when old methods move slow to modern thought.

I wrote to the Rajah giving my reasons for leaving and some suggestions. I advocated the establishment of a Secretariat, and the appointment of a Government Secretary. I thought perhaps I had said too much, because my letter was never answered. Later on my scheme was adopted.

The final months were painful.

I faced an operation; complications ensued, and I spent a long while in bed. Everyone was kind, but I shall never forget the discomfort of being laid up in an Eastern hospital--the sweating heat, the gnawing hours of sleeplessness, agonized by the onslaught of pinging mosquitoes. The Matron's monkey was the only thing that seemed to cheer me up!

Everything comes to an end. Three days after the Rajah's return to Kuching, my wife and I sat in the Residency drawing-room with a bottle of champagne to mellow the parting. The pictures, the ornaments, the personal touch, had gone; nothing remained but the shell.

We went down to the boat. Handshakes, a cheer, and Amarullah, the Pathan Orderly who had played with Raymond since he was a baby, standing alone, weeping, at the edge of the wharf.

The sun had set when we passed Cape Datu. I stood at the taffrail. An afterglow of golden glory shimmered across the sea and lit up Mount Poit. Then blue twilight swallowed up the land.